AN INTERVIEW WITH HILLARY CLINTON

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Republican Mudbath

Life in Bush Hell – James Pinkerton

The Kemp Party vs. The Dole Party .....*Fred Barnes*
Exorcising the Religious Right .....*Michael Lind*
Rethinking Race .....*Tony Snow*
Conservatism and Clinton .....*Andrew Sullivan*

Voice Mail Bliss, by Malcolm Gladwell

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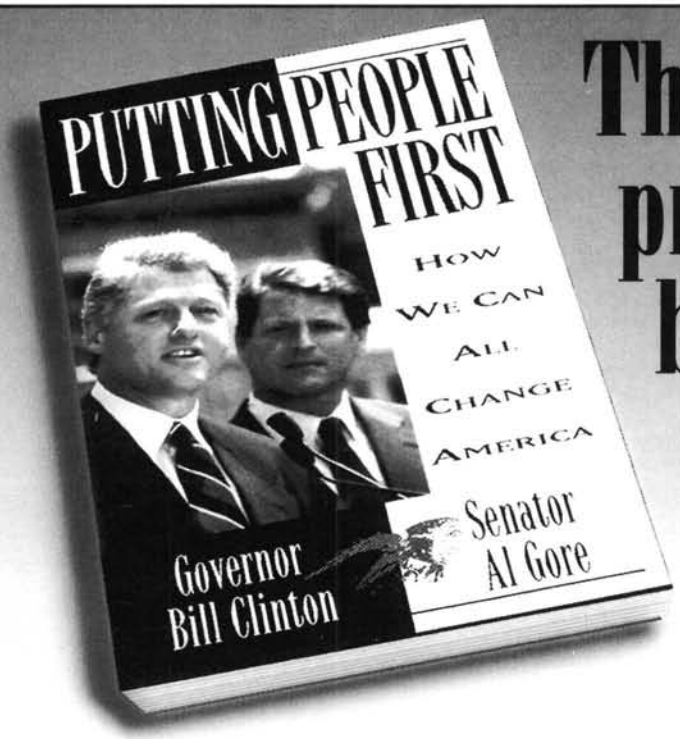

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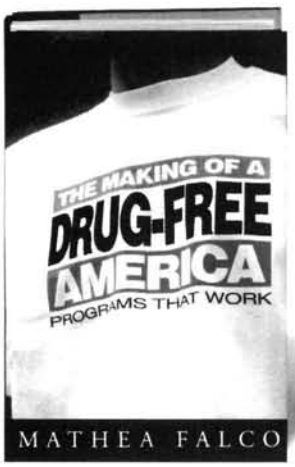

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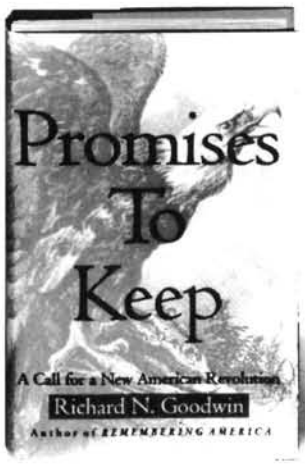

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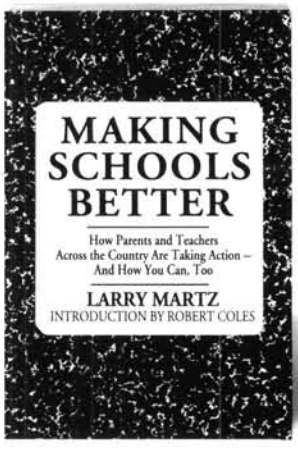
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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

DECEMBER 14, 1992

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CORRESPONDENCE

Critics' corner

To the editors:

David Denby raises the dread specter of censorship, brushing off Michael Medved's denials that he is advocating such a course ("I Lost It at the Movies," November 2). What disappears entirely is Medved's main point: Why, when Hollywood bends over backward not to offend various P.C. sensibilities, does it care nothing about offending the mainstream? The vogue of political correctness in Hollywood, a prominent feature of Medved's story, is passed over in silence—all the more astonishing considering Denby's riposte at the end against the new "multiculturalism."

On the one hand, according to Denby, movies respond to popular taste—"many moviegoers love violent, nihilistic junk"—and he speaks of the "deep down crappiness" of the movies almost with affection; Medved is presumably out of touch with the masses at the malls, and the declining profits in Hollywood have nothing to do with offended audiences. On the other hand, the problem with Medved is that he is "so resolutely middle class ... so hopelessly caught within his demagogic mentality"—i.e., that he is a vulgarian "innocent of aesthetic interests." This, of course, concedes Medved's main point—movies have become hostile to middle-class values.

In case we too are innocent of those "aesthetic interests," Denby gives us examples "of note" trashed by his un-hip colleague, such as the "hilarious and frightening" *GoodFellas*. (Actually, this is a brutal film.) Our instinctive recoil from the atrocities committed is intentionally confused through sympathetic development of some of the characters; a grisly murder scene is followed by a scene in which those characters joke at the dinner table with their mother—what lovable thugs! This sort of insightful moral experimentation (how exciting it is when violent characters are made accessible to us, the common herd that follows the rules!) is a tiresome pose of the artist since the nineteenth century, and was brilliantly diagnosed in an earlier TNR article as "high-low brow." It is clear that Denby, along with most of the critical establishment, is part of the problem Medved describes.

Of course Medved's book has faults. To my mind, Denby didn't even mention the most damning indictment of all—the guy doesn't even like "The Simpsons"!

JONATHAN HAND
Ithaca, New York

To the editors:

David Denby sneers that Michael Medved's consulting work for Paramount Pictures is "a serious breach of integrity." *New York* magazine (where Denby opines) was run for years by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp., owner of Twentieth Century-Fox. How many synergistic rave reviews and puff pieces did *he* write?

In his concluding paragraph Denby rolls his eyeballs and sneers, "A critic shall lead us! Disrupt the board meetings!" Does he remember this golden oldie?

> How many members of the board of Warner Communications Inc. have seen *Cobra*?... [Do] the people exercising ultimate responsibility for a movie company's reputation have a clear idea of the nature of their most visible product[?]... [T]here are movies, even profitable movies, that do not deserve to carry the logo of a great company.... [T]he murder scenes ... are thoroughly disgusting.... In style, meaning, effect—in every way—*Cobra* is unimaginably degraded.... This is what Warner Bros. chooses to open at 2,131 theaters. So you say, what else is new? Business as usual.

The philistine Medved? No, Denby in *New York*, June 9, 1986—six years before "Cop Killer."

GENE DESANTIS
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

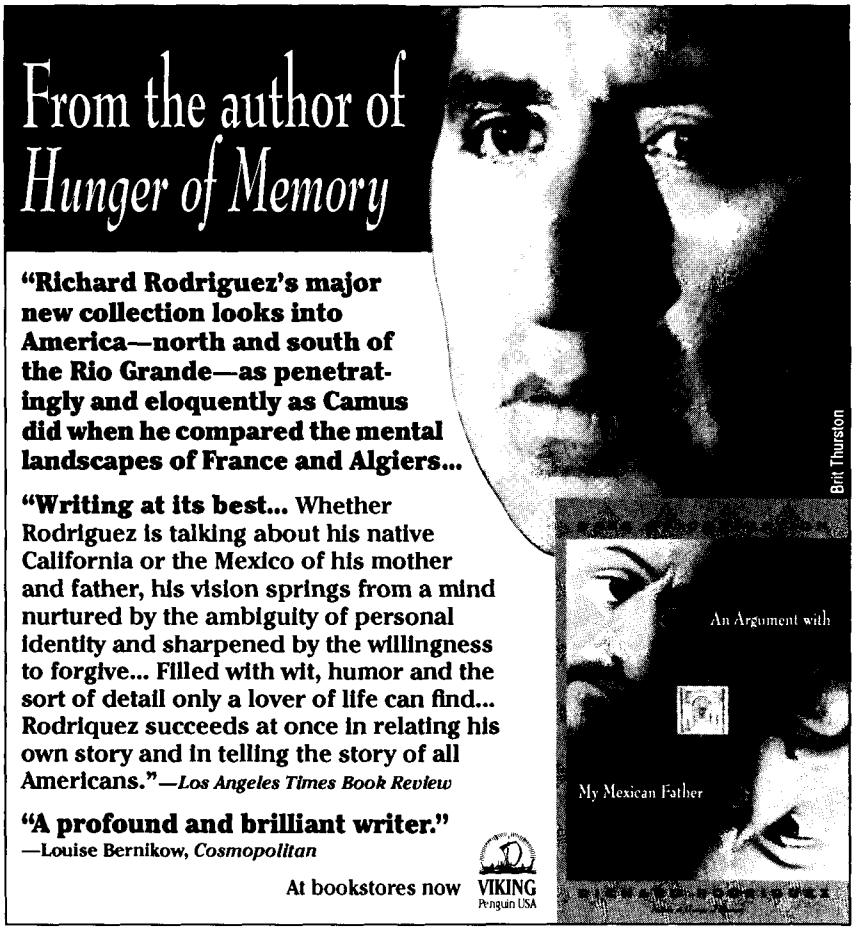
Join the club

To the editors:

I found Andrew Sullivan's Washington Diarist on the AIDS quilt moving ("Quilt," November 2). It has also crystallized my feelings about the disease. I am not bigoted toward people with AIDS, but I find myself very bitter.

Recently I have had to watch my too young mother begin her third battle against cancer in six years. Odds are it will be her last. I am tired of hearing about AIDS as if it were the Black Death reincarnated. I also am tired of hearing that no one is doing enough to combat it. No power on earth, no action taken or not taken could have prevented my mother's cancer. AIDS is not the only incurable disease in which the feeling of utter powerlessness is so overwhelming.

I personally know many people who are fighting or have died fighting cancer. I know none who has AIDS. I know that fighting disease is not and should not be a zero-sum game. But as I watch my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mother go through the living hell of chemotherapy yet again, perhaps Sullivan will understand why I switch the channel or turn the page when I hear or see the word "AIDS." I am tired of hearing the unending reports on "Nightline," "MacNeil/Lehrer," "Today," "Oprah," whatever, on the latest twist and turn in the AIDS Epidemic Plague Crisis Disaster Holocaust Tragedy.

Cancer has been around a lot longer and has killed so many more. I sympathize with AIDS victims, families, and friends. I don't begrudge them resources. But I do begrudge them the attention and their righteous indignation. After all, they are joining a rather large club.

ERIC LABS
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Last GSP

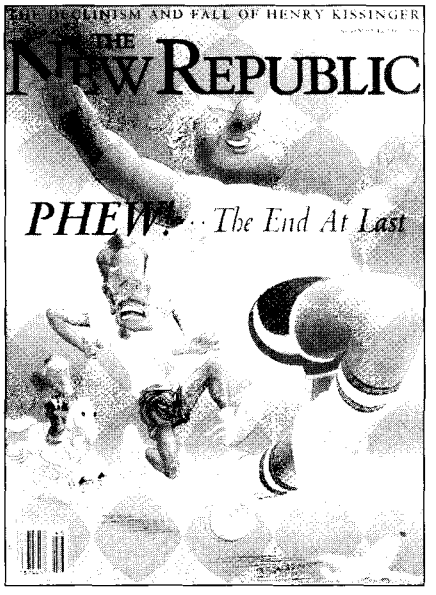
To the editors:

Melissa Robinson provided an apt description of representatives who wavered in their support of the generalized system of preferential tariffs for developing countries (GSP) due to concerns over competitive impacts on the U.S. economy ("Trade Nimbys," November 16). But more extraordinary was the unilateral decision of the Bush administration to revoke GSP for the newly democratic republics of former Yugoslavia when there was no indication of any adverse impact upon U.S. industry.

Yugoslavia had been an original beneficiary of the GSP program in 1976. In late 1991 President Bush stated that he did not believe in economic sanctions against Yugoslavia but would follow the lead of the European Community. When the E.C. suggested it would terminate its preferential tariff programs, the president said he would follow. The E.C., however, subsequently withdrew these sanctions and extended diplomatic recognition. While professing to be multilateral in his approach, the president unilaterally implemented his sanctions on December 24, 1991.

Bush's termination of this program violated the law that requires sixty days' advance notice to Congress before a country is withdrawn from the GSP program. No notice was given. The United States continued its unilateral approach long after other non-E.C. trading partners suspended or retroactively reinstated their tariff preferences (Canada, Sweden), instilling a lingering mistrust into such small countries as Slovenia and Bosnia. During this period, for example, Slovenia, many miles removed from any fighting, was forced to reorient its trade relationships due to the complete collapse of its internal Yugoslav markets, and necessarily established deeper commercial ties with neighboring Germany and Austria. It was simultaneously absorbing Croatian and Muslim refugees equal to more than 3 percent of its population, while paying millions of extra dollars in duties.

The tariff program was eventually reinstated in September, when James Baker had left the State Department and Lawrence Eagleburger became acting secretary. In late September, Eagleburger had discussed the possibility of a free trade agreement with Slovenia with Slovene Foreign Minister Rupel in New York; this will be as close as Slovenia ever gets to diplomatic recognition that the United States was misguided in its unilateral increases in tariffs. GSP is now in



place for all former republics except "rump Yugoslavia."

MARK A. COHEN
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

In "Trade Nimbys," Melissa Robinson misidentifies Dave Nagle as the Republican representative from Iowa. He is a Democrat and, after losing a close race to chipmunk-cheeked Republican Jim Nussle, will not be able "to push a slew of changes to the GSP next year."

MARTIN SCHMUTTERER
Iowa City, Iowa

Jogged memories

To the editors:

Joseph Epstein maintains in "Runners-Up" (November 16) that a man who walks for exercise is able to "sort out his thoughts, think about the world; running, he can only think about himself: his lungs, his legs, his blood flow, his body." If, as his piece suggests, Epstein is not a jogger, how does he know this? I now bicycle and swim, but for years I was an avid runner, and I certainly didn't spend forty minutes each day ruminating about my physical state.

I wonder if Epstein is one of those sedentary types who jog one time, bitch and moan the whole time, collapse at the end in exhaustion, and never run again, assuming that the agony they have just experienced is an inevitable and permanent side-effect of the running experience. Competitive marathoners and road-racers have to push themselves, but the average-guy runner sets a reasonable pace that not only accommodates but promotes the sorting out of thoughts.

Epstein states that a man who's just finished a run "feels smug and overly confident, too damn good about himself generally." In some cases this may well be true. But the same thing can be said of many a man who's just finished a few martinis with his dinner. And the jogger doesn't have a hangover the next morning.

I do not agree that it is "unseemly" or a waste of time for a president of the United States to spend "one-eighteenth of his waking life" jogging, especially if the exercise keeps him physically fit and mentally alert. The thought of Richard Nixon in jogging shorts is preposterous, but had he been a runner he might have dissipated some of this characteristic tenseness and paranoia, and Watergate might never have happened.

DAVID ENGLISH
Somerville, Massachusetts

To the editors:

Joseph Epstein mistakenly asserts that Thomas Jefferson would not have jogged. Sarah Randolph, in *The Domestic Life of Thomas Jefferson*, states that, at least as a young man, Jefferson jogged about two miles each day: "During the most closely occupied days of his college life, it was his habit to study until two o'clock at night and rise at dawn. The day he spent in close application—the only recreation being a run at twilight to a certain stone which stood at a point a mile beyond the limits of the town."

EDWARD A. BERKOVICH
Salt Lake City, Utah

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TRB®
FROM WASHINGTON

Bias and baloney

Aha! Gotcha! That undoubtedly is the reaction of conservatives across the land to evidence that American journalists tend to have liberal political views. The evidence comes in a survey of 1,400 journalists conducted over the summer and reported in "The American Journalist in the 1990s," a study published by something called the Freedom Forum, a philanthropic spin-off of the Gannett media empire.

Few tears have been shed over the study's conclusion that the typical journalist earns less in real terms today than in the late 1960s. (Average age, 36; median 1992 income, $31,297.) Instead there has been gnashing of teeth over the news that 44.1 percent of journalists consider themselves Democrats and only 16.3 percent Republicans. The gap has grown since a similar survey in 1982 and is far larger than the gap in polls of the general population, some of which have shown the parties close to even. At a time when Republicans are toying with a variety of stab-in-the-back theories of why they lost the last election, most involving the press, such findings are red meat to right-wing conspiratorialists.

Why do journalists tend to be liberals? The extent of this tendency is exaggerated in paranoid conservative minds. And there is the countervailing reality that media owners and editorial pages tend to be conservative. Two decades after George Will was discovered sipping a cherry soda at a local drugstore, the Washington punditocracy—on the op-ed pages and T.V. yack shows—also has a definite conservative slant. Nevertheless, the general liberal inclination of journalists would be hard to deny.

Perhaps I am not the best person to try to solve the mystery of why. My own political views are more or less liberal. They were not genetically implanted, and I hold them under no form of compulsion except that of reason. It seems to me they're the sort of views a reasonable, intelligent person would hold. Since most journalists I meet are reasonable, intelligent people, the mystery to me is not why journalists tend to be liberals but why so many other reasonable, intelligent people are not. But it's not hard to come up with plausible theories to explain the gap, having to do with psychological disposition and so on.

The point is that there is no conspiracy going on here. People freely choose their politics and freely choose their careers. No one is forcing journalists to hold liberal political views, and no one is preventing or even discouraging conservatives from becoming journalists. If it just happens to work out that way, on average, so what?

A political preference is not itself a "bias." This basic point seems beyond the understanding of many press critics. Any journalist who has had this argument with a non-journalist knows the frustration of being accused of "bias" by someone whose political views are of such red-hot intensity that your own pale by comparison. Many who will wave this Gannett study as proof of a press liberal "bias" will refuse to accept that their conservative views make them "biased" too.

But should journalists be different? Some media critics, and some journalists themselves, think that the press ought to function as a sort of sacred priesthood of political celibates, purged of the ideological longings that inflame ordinary folks. The executive editor of *The Washington Post* famously goes so far as to refrain from voting. Perhaps he also succeeds in having no opinion about whom he would vote for were he not so scrupulous. If so, his self-discipline would do credit to any monk. Whether it is quite so admirable for a journalist is another question. In any event, it is surely rare. Journalists, by definition, are inquisitive people with an interest in public affairs. To expect them to form no conclusions about the people and policies they report on is absurd.

What do conservative media critics want? Presumably they would not favor a quota program for right-wingers, some kind of Americans with Political Disabilities Act, whereby people handicapped with conservative political opinions would get preference over better-qualified liberals for the same job. What they, and everybody else, can reasonably expect is for reporters to tell the story as straight as possible. Evidence about journalists' political preference says nothing one way or another about how they are performing that function. Most national reporters, on T.V. and in print, do it pretty well. Certainly of the two newspapers here in Washington, the one whose writers and editors make no effort to avoid slanting the news is the conservative *Washington Times*, not the supposedly liberal *Post*.

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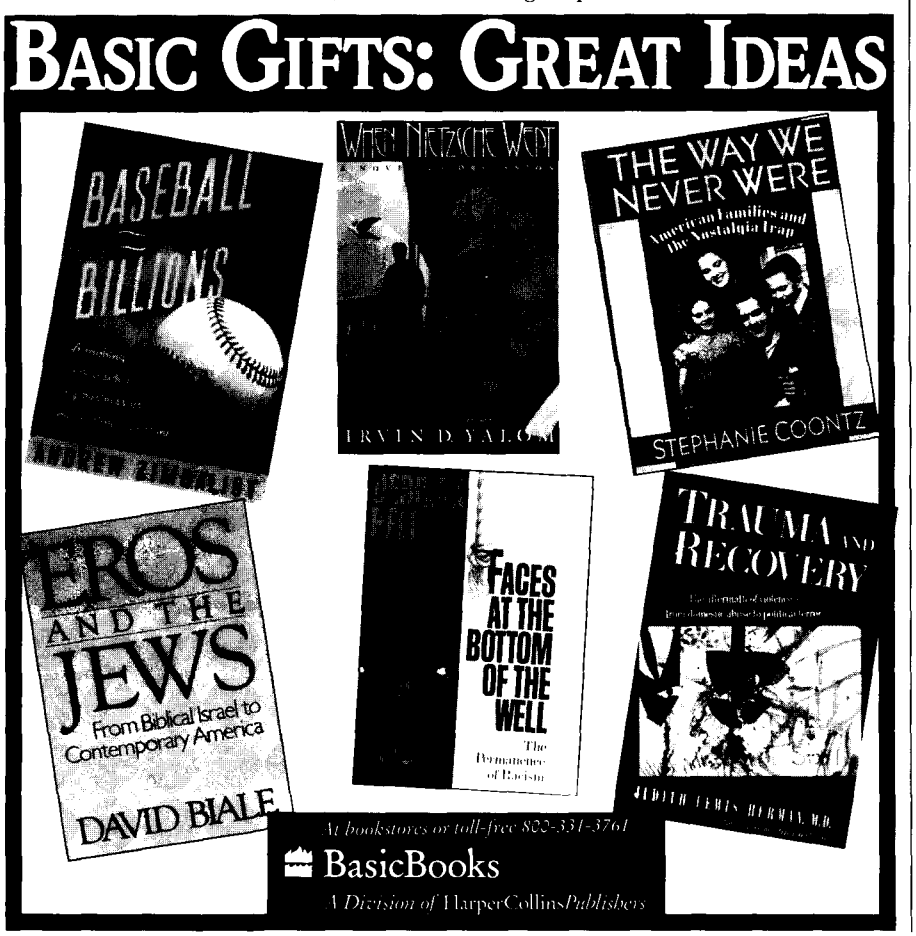

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

DECEMBER 14, 1992

BILL'S BLUE PENCIL

For the first time in twelve years we have an undivided government, and with it the opportunity to put to an end the legislative cold war that has crippled the country. As Bill Clinton has discovered in the weeks since the election, however, there are limits to the cooperation he can expect even from a politically sympathetic Congress. Already he has been put upon by Democratic leaders to relax or retreat from several of his campaign pledges, chief among which is Clinton's request for a line-item veto. Senator Robert Byrd is unalterably opposed, and majority leader George Mitchell will only say the subject is "appropriate to discuss." And though Clinton and House Speaker Thomas Foley have tentatively proposed a compromise version of the line-item veto, a recent congressional letter in support of the measure garnered just two Democratic signatures.

Clinton should resist the opposition and stick to his original promise. His new Democratic agenda depends entirely for its public support on the notion that it can keep effective government within reasonable limits. An enhanced veto power as Clinton and forty-two other governors currently enjoy would enable him to gut bits of frivolous legislation from vast spending bills while abolishing the offensive congressional practice of "vote swapping" for pet programs. Clinton, in short, would have the power to hold Congress accountable for the work it does; and government for the waste it generates.

That same power would, of course, hold Clinton to stricter standards of accountability as well. As Michael Kinsley suggested in these pages three years ago (see "Let Him Have It," TRB, November 20, 1989), the line-item veto would rid the presidency of one of its cynical inclinations: blaming Congress. Clinton will find that since more than half of the federal budget is consumed by entitlement programs and debt payments, "lining out" pork alone won't significantly restrain spending. Real deficit reduction will require cutting meat, not fat. But unlike Reagan and Bush, should a veto-armed Clinton fail to make those cuts, he won't be able speciously to finger a spendthrift Congress. Nor could he argue, as his predecessors have, that Congress "forced" him to pass legislation he opposed by embedding it in legislation he favored.

Foley calls his proposed compromise an "enhanced recission." Under the current system, the president recommends specific cuts in spending bills, and Congress, which isn't required to act on them, usually ignores the suggestions. Under Foley's proposal, the president's recissions would have the force of law unless Congress overrode them by a simple majority vote. But there is a problem with Foley's proposal: it is unconstitutional under the Supreme Court's 1983 decision in *INS* v. *Chadha*. The Supreme Court ruled that legislation must be passed by both houses and presented to the president, whose vetoes can be overridden only by a two-thirds vote of both houses. It is unsettling that Foley and former law professor Clinton are so cavalier about basic constitutional requirements.

There is a way to enact a line-item veto without amending the Constitution. Congress can choose among several versions that would satisfy the Supreme Court. The best solution is, unfortunately, also the most cumbersome: Congress could simply resist passing the omnibus spending bills that have robbed the president of his deliberative powers. In the mid-'70s Congress began the now standard practice of sending the president one enormous spending resolution each year instead of several small ones, forcing the president to vote up or down on hundreds of disparate pieces of legislation at once. Instead, Congress could vote on all appropriations, item by item, and present each to the president as a separate bill. Alternatively, Congress could change the definition of a bill by changing the rules of both houses to declare that 200 appropriations bills will be put to a single vote, but that each will be presented separately to the president for his signature or veto. Probably the most durable solution, however, would be to amend the U.S. Code's "Dictionary Act" so that any individual appropriation contained within a bill would be treated as a separate bill. That should be strict enough to satisfy even Justice Scalia—and, with some coaxing from a Democratic president, perhaps Foley and Mitchell as well. •

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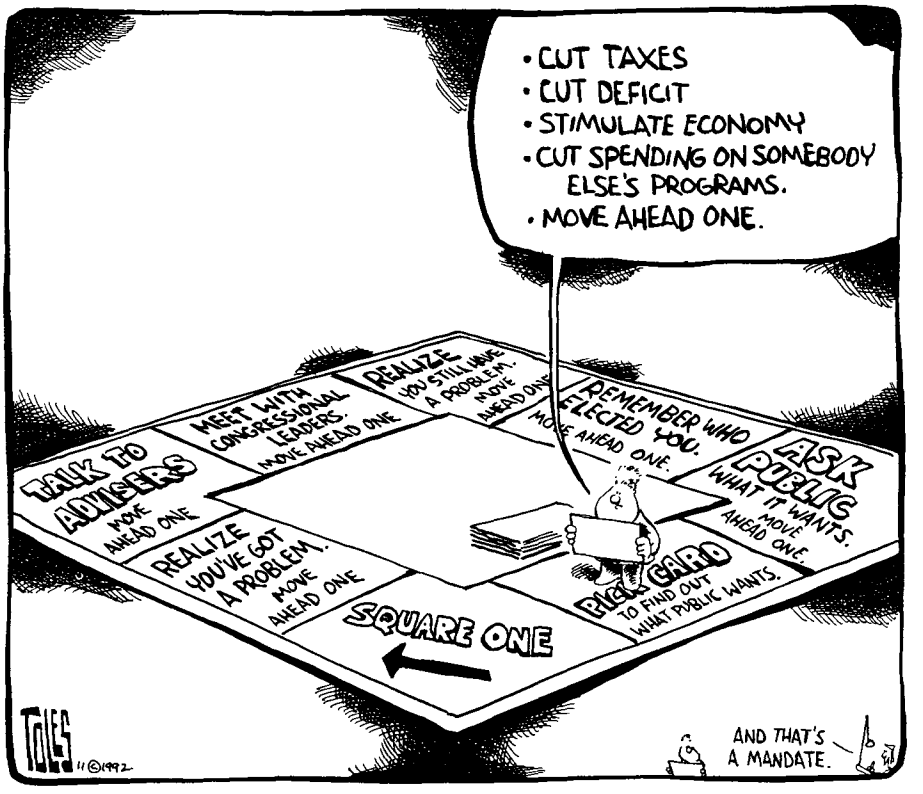
NOTEBOOK

CLINTON SUCK-UP WATCH: "There is an extra dimension to [George] Stephanopoulos now that extends beyond his bond with Clinton. As the 1992 presidential campaign evolved into a year-long television maxiseries, he was embraced as part of the national family: the Clinton spokesman with the fourteen-letter surname and unflappable demeanor who stood against Republican gut-punchers and weaved his way flawlessly through the day-long tube tests from the morning shows to 'Inside Politics' to 'MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour' to 'Larry King Live' to 'Nightline.' It is too early to say fame becomes him, but there is no doubt that it is careening his way."
—David Maraniss, *The Washington Post*, November 23

STATE OF DISREPAIR: When James Baker left the State Department to run George Bush's re-election campaign as White House chief of staff, it was clear that Baker was holding his nose. The role of handler was beneath him. We were to forget the squalid campaign of 1988, whose every smear he approved, and think of him only associating with distinguished world leaders. Now we discover that he was told by his underlings that Assistant Secretary of State Elizabeth Tamposi was rifling through Bill Clinton's passport files in search of documentary props for further smears. About this violation of civil liberties, which earned Tamposi, post-election, her firing, Baker was eerily silent at the time. What did he know and when did he know it? Perhaps current government investigations will provide the answer. Given the rigid line of command in the Baker satrapy, the answer is probably far more than he is now admitting. In the meantime, we do know that he presided over the partisan manipulation of the State Department and the tarnishing of its reputation.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• CUT SPENDING ON SOMEBODY ELSE'S PROGRAMS.
• MOVE AHEAD ONE.
TALK TO VOTERS
MOVE AHEAD ONE
MEET WITH CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS. MOVE AHEAD ONE
REALIZE YOU STILL HAVE A PROBLEM. MOVE AHEAD ONE
REMEMBER WHO ELECTED YOU. MOVE AHEAD ONE.
ASK PUBLIC WHAT IT WANTS. MOVE AHEAD ONE.
REALIZE YOU'VE GOT A PROBLEM. MOVE AHEAD ONE
SQUARE ONE
PRESS CARD TO FIND OUT WHAT PUBLIC WANTS.
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SURPRISE!: Now that an extensive report from the special counsel to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has discovered, like our own Steven Emerson and Jesse Furman (see "What October Surprise?," TNR, November 18, 1991), that there is no evidence for the theory that key Reagan officials conspired to prevent the release of American hostages in 1980, we provide the following roll call of all those who bought this paranoid fantasy: Gary Sick, Random House, *The New York Times*, Robert Parry, PBS's "Frontline," Craig Unger, Christopher Hitchens, Doug Ireland, *Columbia Journalism Review*, Diane Rehm, Mary McGrory, and, unfortunately, at one point, THE NEW REPUBLIC.

BUSINESS AS USUAL: Bill Clinton says he's going to clean up Washington, but the people with the money clearly don't believe him. Last week the Republican lobbying firm of Black, Manafort, Stone & Kelly hired for an undisclosed six-figure salary Michael Lewan, assistant to Democratic Senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut. Lieberman, who is close to Clinton, is often held out as an example of the new idealism. Perhaps on his next television appearance he will explain why his former aide is worth hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, and why Lewan was so quick to take the money and run.

A FRIEND LEAVES: With this issue, we say goodbye to Sidney Blumenthal, who departs to write the "Letter from Washington" for *The New Yorker*. Sidney worked at TNR for the presidential campaign of 1984, returning here in 1990. This year he gave us pioneering campaign coverage, from the anointing of Clinton to the skewering of Perot. We will miss his cutting metaphors and his imperviousness to deadlines, his daily musings, and his grasp of political history. We will even miss the phone calls from Scott Barnes. •

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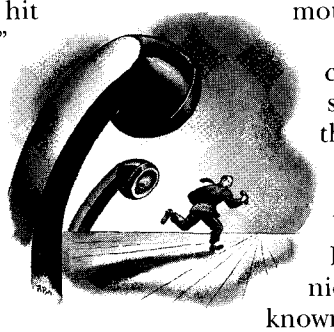
SPEED DIALER

By Malcolm Gladwell

Once it was as simple as this. I sat at my desk. The phone rang. I answered it. It is a memory I have tried to erase.

Now when the phone rings, I first read the number on my Caller I.D. and decide whether to pick it up. If I'm on the phone already, I see the incoming call and decide who is more important, the person I'm talking to or the person I could talk to. I triage and hit the "drop" button, sacrificing line one for line two. Or I conference the new one in. They talk. I hit "mute" to chat with a deskmate, then "hold" to take line three.



Sometimes I let the calls go unanswered, then scroll through my messages in voice mail, deleting some with a satisfying terminality, saving others. I retrieve messages from airports and planes, punching in encrypted number sequences, wielding an entirely unfamiliar phone with the same deftness as I would my own.

There are occasions when I hear my pre-programmed personalized phone ring from across the room. I come running too late to see the number on Caller I.D., and the caller doesn't leave a message. So I hit "answer call," which immediately dials back the number that just dialed me. "You called?" I ask innocently, as if I do not recognize the inherent belligerence of the act. Or perhaps a caller irritates. I program that number into "Call block," meaning that whenever they phone again a computer politely informs them that I will not be taking their call. Sure, they can try another number, but I have forwarded my calls from my office to my home, putting identical voice mail messages on each phone to obscure my true whereabouts. The calls bounce from one to the other in a fruitless loop. The notion that a telephone number corresponds to a physical location has been irrevocably shattered. I could be anywhere.

These new telephone services are not simple gadgets. They are the basis of a revolutionary shift in power from the caller to the called.

Take my voice mail. It functions like a real secretary, only better. A real secretary would give away far too much information, eroding whatever slim advantage I have over the person interrupting my day: "Mr. Gladwell is on the phone." "Mr. Gladwell is at lunch until 2 o'clock." A real secretary might crack under the relentless charm of some stranger and reveal critical details of where I am and when I'll be back. Voice mail cannot do that. It is unalterably unambiguous. "I am on the phone or away from my desk," my message says, which is as functionally tautological as "I am at work or I am not at work," "I may answer your call or I may not answer your call."

Caller I.D. takes me one step further. As the numbers roll across my screen, I purge the undesirable. 301-234-7645 is a man who crossed me once. I will never pick up that call. 703-332-8355 is my real estate agent. 202-443-1130 brings a moment of uncertainty. The 443 summons the image of an old girlfriend, the 1130 is the suffix of my mother's number. The numerated images merge in a brief, Oedipal moment.

There are those who do not understand these changes. Some civil libertarians fret that Caller I.D. will sacrifice the anonymity of those who want to leak important information, an objection that manages to overlook both the invention of the pay phone and the fact that no one other than the ten journalists still writing about the Warren Commission ever gets anonymous calls.

Nor does the phone company fully comprehend what all this means. The reason the phone company likes Caller I.D. is that it permits the public correction of those who would use the phone improperly, exposing those who would hide behind the anonymity of a phone call. By the same reasoning, phone companies have promoted the abomination known as call waiting, which permits any incoming caller to hijack any ongoing phone conversation with impunity. Their goal is to break down the barriers of the conventional phone call, to make telephone conversation as unstructured and fluid as face-to-face conversation, to let participants come and go freely.

They are totally wrong. The true appeal of advances in phone technology is that they permit us to move in exactly the opposite direction—to use the phone to erect new barriers, to get closer to our phones and farther from those who would use them to get to us.

It is a notion rich with paradox. My voice mail liberates me from the neatly stacked rows of messages on a receptionist's desk and from the blinking black box in the hallway of my apartment. It means my messages have ceased to have any physical reality and spring ex nihilo from any receiver anywhere. But it also means that I can never escape my messages. So long as there is a pay phone within sight or a cellular phone in my pocket they are always with me, swirling about in electronic hyperspace.

Why is this so appealing? Perhaps it is that I am selfishly searching for a more perfectly asymmetrical conversation, where others call and I reap the ego gratification of them having called. Perhaps it is that I am obsessively searching for relief from the anxiety associated with not knowing who is trying to reach me with-

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out making the commitment to actually take any calls. Or perhaps it is something even more basic than this. Maybe I just don't like telephones and would prefer to reserve my most important communications for something more real and more personal.

Take fax machines, for example. I have three separate numbers....

MALCOLM GLADWELL is a *Washington Post* reporter.

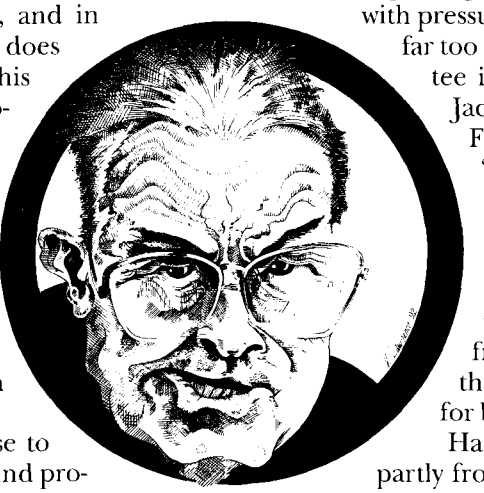
THE HIT LIST

NOWHERE MAN

By Jacob Weisberg

Editors' note: Here begins a series of brief assessments of people we believe Clinton should not appoint to his administration.

The Almanac of American Politics calls Lee Hamilton "one of the few members of Congress who is genuinely respected—and spoken of in hushed tones—on all sides." *Washington Post* columnist David Broder writes that he is "independent, thoughtful, and in every respect reliable." Hamilton does stand out among his colleagues for his obvious integrity and his lack of arrogance. A Methodist minister's son, he has represented a liberal enclave carved out of southern Indiana since 1964, which is the approximate vintage of his close-cropped hairstyle. His office is decorated with soft-focus K-Mart paintings of puppies and babbling brooks. "Gosh" and "darn" are his nearest brushes with profanity.



But it would be a perverse response to the tenure of James Baker if niceness and probity were to become Bill Clinton's principal criteria in choosing a secretary of state, the position for which Hamilton has often been mentioned since the election. A reputation for integrity can disguise a hollowness within, a lack of content. Despite being an all-around mensch, Hamilton is notably deficient in the forcefulness and vision that the chief American architect of the post-cold war world ought to possess.

Hamilton's limpness as a thinker has been evident since the Reagan years, when he emerged as a leading actor in foreign policy. A party-line voter against military aid to anti-Communist rebels in Nicaragua and Angola, and to the government of El Salvador, Hamilton never put forward an alternative to the Reagan Doctrine, or even argued against it explicitly. He characteristically cast his opposition and outrage in terms of process: the president was failing to take Congress's advisory role seriously.

Though he is a vigorous proponent of congressional oversight, however, Hamilton's own performance as head of the House Intelligence Committee is one of its most notable failures. From the shoot-down of two U.S. mercenaries in a CIA helicopter over Nicaragua in 1984 to newspaper disclosures about the National Security Council-run "Enterprise" in 1986, evidence accumulated that the Reagan administration was secretly funding the contras in violation of the Boland amendment. Hamilton asked Robert McFarlane and Oliver North about it. Both men lied, but Hamilton pushed no further. "I, for one, am willing to take you at your word," he said to McFarlane.

At North's trial, the prosecution called Hamilton himself as a witness. "Through Hamilton ... we hoped to humanize the crime of 'lying to Congress,'" Jeffrey Toobin, a lawyer for the prosecution, later wrote in *Opening Arguments*. "North, we wanted to suggest, did not just lie to some marble building, but to this nice man." But why did the nice man believe him? The trial judge, Gerhard Gesell, thought it was because Hamilton didn't want to challenge a popular president.

Appointed to head the congressional commission investigating Iran-contra, Hamilton pushed to give North and Poindexter immunity. This had the (unjust) consequence of dooming their subsequent prosecutions. Hamilton argued that getting the truth was more important that putting lawbreakers behind bars. But faced with pressure to conclude, he quit investigating far too soon. The final report of the committee includes a dissent by Peter Rodino, Jack Brooks, Louis Stokes, and Dante Fascell, which notes the many still "unresolved questions, missing documents, and unexplored leads," and implicitly criticizes Hamilton for setting a short deadline for completion, and for not being tougher in compelling documents and testimony from the White House. Nonetheless, the hearings left him with a reputation for being Mr. Smith in Washington.

Hamilton's blunders seem to stem partly from innate caution and partly from a status quoism not unlike George Bush's. Last year Hamilton insisted on excising from an export control bill criticisms of Syria for supporting terrorism, violating human rights, and restricting emigration, so as not to upset the nascent peace process. More significantly, he never joined those in Congress who moved to condemn Mikhail Gorbachev after the crackdown in the Baltics. "We have to help them get through the immediate crisis," he said in December 1990. "It's not in our interest to see the country break apart at the seams." Asked about whether he should have been a critic of Gorbachev earlier, he responds: "Well, let's see, I don't know that I've thought much about that.... Did I stay with him too long? I'll have to review that. I don't know."

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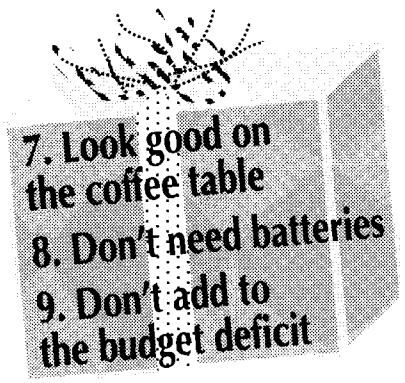

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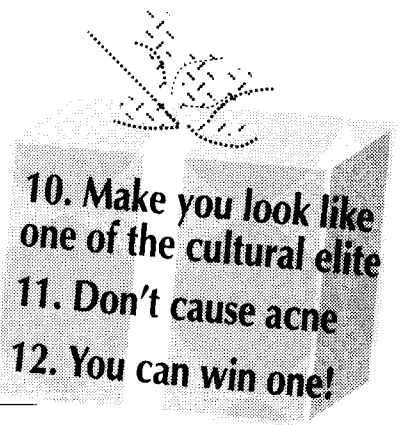

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A rare moment of incaution was Hamilton's strong stand against the Gulf war. He co-sponsored, with majority leader Richard Gephardt, a resolution to tie Bush's hands and keep the country out of war. Hamilton's speech in the great debate of January 11, 1991, now reads like a pessimist's almanac: the U.S.-led coalition would fracture, there would be massive American casualties, victory would have destabilizing consequences, war would break the economy, the allies would not share the cost, "Anti-Americanism will rise, terrorism will increase, and radical Islamic forces will be strengthened."

Hamilton remains unrepentant about his vote. He argues sanctions could have worked and says the administration shares the blame for Saddam's invasion of Kuwait, since it helped to arm him and did not send a clear warning not to cross the Kuwaiti border. True enough, but Hamilton's own record is hardly better. As chairman of the subcommittee that handles the Mideast, Hamilton stalled a bill proposed by Howard Berman of California to impose comprehensive sanctions on Iraq. Six days before the invasion, he voted against the Glickman amendment, which would have cut off agricultural credits.

Hamilton's problem wasn't malfeasance or stupidity. It was the limitation of his horizon. Bill Clinton, in his Milwaukee speech, proposed a post-cold war focus on democracy-building abroad. Hamilton thinks this is fine—he's one of the people Clinton showed the speech before delivering it—but he gives no sense of being able to articulate how democracy might serve as a cornerstone of foreign policy. Hamilton has also raised objections to the National Endowment for Democracy and voted to cut its budget. Part of this is a generational problem. The most fervent advocates of the democratization movement, such as Stephen Solarz, Dave McCurdy, and Brian Atwood, are younger. At 61, Hamilton seems not to grasp the idea in the same way. Clinton could, of course, do worse than to choose someone of Hamilton's fundamental decency for his secretary of state. But decency is not policy, or even a view of the world. Clinton could do a whole lot better. •

An interview with Mrs. Clinton.

HILLARY'S KIDS

By Roger Rosenblatt

In a speech at Spelman College in Atlanta three weeks before the election, Hillary Clinton told the students in the audience that she wants to be "a voice for children in the White House and to implement an agenda my husband will propose." I interviewed her a few hours later, and our discussion centered on her proposed work for children—a cause to which she has devoted twenty years, mainly with the Children's Defense Fund, on whose board of directors she has served since 1978. In our talk, her views on family matters in general and children in particular were not always consistent or fully worked out, but they were both more moderate and more complicated than they are usually depicted.

The most controversial of Clinton's views, of course, has been her proposal for the presumption of competence in children. Since her now infamous 1979 article, "Children's Rights: A Legal Perspective," published in a collection of essays on the subject, she has held that children, now deemed competent to make decisions affecting their lives when they reach the age of 18, should be presumed competent beginning at age 12. The existing presumption of children's incompetence is based on a supposed correlation between their dependence on parents and an immature sense of responsibility. Under Clinton's proposal a child would have the right to claim such things as a good education, corrective health measures, and to get out of a neglectful or abusive home, as in the Gregory K case in Florida—though Clinton notes that suit was really the foster parents', not the boy's. But children would have to demonstrate responsibility as well. In Arkansas, Clinton helped pass a state requirement that children remain in school if they want to get and keep a driver's license.

When I raised the subject of Clinton's competence proposal, she readily replied: "You know, I never meant the presumption of competence to be anything other than a thought-provoking idea. It didn't get that much notice at the time because what gradually began to happen is that a variety of children were presumed competent to do an increasing number of things. The courts began letting children over the age of 12 express preference in divorce cases, for example. So there wasn't any great cataclysmic event that occurred. Children's developmental stages began to be acted upon, and over the last twenty years, things kind of evolved."

Whether or not one believes that she intended her idea merely to make a stir, her proposal seemed to suggest a revolution in legal thinking about children. In her 1979 article she named specific areas in which children's rights should be asserted: "Decisions about motherhood and abortion, cosmetic surgery, treatment of venereal disease, or employment, and others where the decision or lack of one will significantly affect the child's future should not be made unilaterally by parents." In "Children Under the Law," an essay written in 1973 for the *Harvard Educational Review* she wrote:

> The basic rationale for depriving people of rights in a dependency relationship is that certain individuals are incapable or undeserving of the right to take care of themselves and consequently need social institutions specifically

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designed to safeguard their position. Along with the family, past and present examples of such arrangements include marriage, slavery, and the Indian reservation system.

One may argue that she was simply establishing a historical context for her cause, but if she was looking for "a thought-provoking idea," she could not have chosen more incendiary analogies.

When I pressed her to give an example of how the presumption of competence would change the law, she replied: "I don't think that it can be implemented with a piece of legislation. It's more a matter of treating children with a level of respect for their increasing capacity. More about attitude than legislation."

I asked: "But isn't the presumption of *in*competence a matter of legislation? So how would the new presumption be applied?"

"You do it by exceptions. I would not necessarily argue that we wipe out all of our rules, and say as of now every child from zero forward is presumed competent. But now we're making a million rules demonstrating why they're *in*competent. I don't think that's helpful. What I would argue for is really a greater amount of respect for children's capacities at stages of development. Why weren't more children originally given a chance to be heard in divorce courts? Because there was this sense that that was an issue they weren't competent on. They might be competent to testify in an automobile accident, or a murder. But *this* was an area where it was viewed that somehow parents would be acting always in their children's best interests. Well, it became clear, through hard human experience, that that was not always the case. Gradually, as the need arose, and it was recognized, a remedy was devised. My argument is that we should always have that potential in the back of our mind."

Clinton may be right that judges have come to realize that feuding parents in divorce cases don't always have their children's best interests at heart, and that children too should be heard—but that doesn't mean that kids in such cases will be as objective as witnesses to accidents and crimes, or that it is necessarily a good idea to get them to testify. If there weren't a real difference between children as objective observers and as pawns in divorce trials, children's competence would hardly be a complex issue, much less one that Clinton would have chosen to champion.

It was clear throughout the interview, however, that she does not advocate children's rights at the expense of the integrity of the family—a position that might disappoint her conservative critics and perhaps some of her liberal supporters as well. My guess is that she began defending children to give them a role in family disputes, but by focusing on children almost exclusively, she inadvertently encouraged a distortion of her views. These views seem to be evolving still. Yet as early as 1977, in a book review for the *Yale Law Journal,* she acknowledged that all these questions "invite fear and confusion, since they touch deeply held and often conflicting convictions about family autonomy and childhood needs."

The day before the Spelman visit there was a story in the papers about a boy who was removed from his mother and placed in a foster home because child-welfare officials contended that the mother had fabricated a disease for the child in order to keep him tethered to her and to get the attention she craved from doctors. "In that kind of case," said Clinton, "it seems to me that the first step to be taken is to help the family, and help the mother. I mean, you don't act on the child. You act to keep the family unit functioning, and you do that by bringing assistance to the person who is most in need of it, who, in this case, is the mother.... I was so grateful to *The Wall Street Journal,* much to my surprise, for asking a professor to read all my writings. And he basically said that in another time I would be accused of being too *conservative.* He said my view has always been we have to do everything possible to keep the family functioning. And we don't do that. Welfare agencies have been too quick to intervene after having ignored problems and allowing them to deteriorate. Or too quick to intervene instead of looking for the least detrimental alternative to intervention. And so the child is often caught in the worst of both worlds. The family is not supported. The state is not an adequate substitute parent. And the child is the object of dispute."

Not surprisingly, the issue of the family is a sensitive matter to her. All of the attacks on her during the campaign as a cold careerist and an indifferent mother shocked Clinton, she said, because she has always seen herself as devoted to family life and to the idea of family. Of course, defending the family is the politically correct posture, but Clinton is caught in a bind here. If she questions the nature or structure of family, she's portrayed as an intellectual harridan. If she supports the family, she sounds like a political hack.

Whatever stance she takes, she has been relentlessly assaulted from the right. In an article in *The American Spectator* last August, Daniel Wattenberg wrote that nobody needs a scale of increasing competence for children, "because we have something far better, families: millions of calibrated scales of increasing competence tailored individually to millions of individual children by millions of parents."

When I cited the piece, Clinton fired back: "I believe that. So what! You know, it's like saying most people don't break the law. That's wonderful. And I'm proud of them, because they have developed an ethical system and norms that reflect their responsibility to society. That's not what we're talking about. This is an attempt to impose a slippery slope argument on the whole issue of children's needs, and the role that the legal systems sometimes have to play. I just reject it. We're only talking about instances in which it is obvious to those willing to see that the finely calibrated, protective system of the family has broken down. And it's broken down either because of a family's inability to function or because of a family's unwillingness to

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abide by what is considered appropriate behavior. And that doesn't mean there is a governmental solution that automatically means intervention, but it *does* mean not to ignore how families have been placed under stress. I think that no one who's fairly read what I've written could argue that I'm for anything other than supporting families."

In fact, in all of her major speeches of the campaign—at Yale Law School, Wellesley, Chautauqua, the University of Illinois, and to the American Bar Association in San Francisco—she emphasized the desirability of family cohesiveness. Yet it is hard to know what she is proposing exactly. She criticizes the welfare agencies for being "too quick to intervene instead of looking for the least detrimental alternatives." Like what?

As far as I know, there is only one place in the country that takes a comprehensive approach to foster care, and its program is sometimes successful, sometimes not. At the Center for Family Life, a private social service agency in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, a program was started in 1988 to keep foster families within the same neighborhood as the biological families. It was hoped that this would reduce the adversarial relationship between the two, while the center tried to restore equilibrium to the biological family and eventually return the child to a healthier home. But this is a hard-fought, continuous process, dotted with failure. Perhaps recognizing this without saying so, Clinton continued to veer back and forth in the interview between advocating the power of the family and the power of the child.

"I think to be a realistic advocate for families is like being a realistic parent," she said. "You know, you unconditionally love your child, but you also recognize what has to be done in order for that child to develop appropriately. And that means sometimes making decisions your child doesn't like. It means understanding how that child does develop, so that you can be an appropriate parent. Well, being an advocate for families means starting from the position of unconditional support for the institution of family, but recognizing realistically that there are times when that family structure is broken down, and that the children are the likely victims of that breakdown."

I asked her why, since she believes in children's competence, she favors parental notification on abortion. "In part," she answered, "because of my idealistic support of families. I have supported parental notice so long as there is some kind of bypass provision, because insofar as possible, we respect and honor the family. It would be better than not in most cases if the family could support a young girl's decision either to bear her child, or to seek an abortion, as opposed to having the child feel alienated and cut off from the people who, no matter what happens to her, are going to be there in her life, one way or the other. But I recognize that that's the idealistic hope, and that's part of why I'm so committed to keeping families together. Realistically, some families cannot deal with [abortion]. There are problems of abuse, incest, rage, all kinds of things. So there has to be some realistic bypass, some pressure valve for the situation. But, I think you should start from the premise of supporting the family."

By "some kind of bypass provision," she means that a pregnant child in a menacing home could have someone other than the primary guardian—another relative, an adult friend—sign the abortion consent. The parental notification law recently voted unanimously into effect in Wisconsin has such a provision. Still, whatever bypass is permitted, the idea of parental notification is logically opposed to the idea of the presumed competence of children. Either Clinton does not see this, or she prefers to fudge the issue on the grounds that families as a whole may be presumed more competent than kids.

An on-the-run interview like this one, taken at a hectic point in the election, reveals only so much. After the ruckus stirred up by Clinton's opinions on children and the family, it was natural for her to wish to appear quieter during the campaign and more restrained in her views when talking to a reporter. But one thing, I think, was clear from our discussion: Hillary Clinton believes that her views of children's rights and of the family are compatible, and she is still attempting to devise the proper balance between the two. In politics, unfortunately, this process of sorting out one's beliefs on morally ambiguous subjects often emerges as hedging or outright dishonesty, as both Clintons discovered in the course of the campaign. •

Republican Mudbath I.

KEMP VS. DOLE

By Fred Barnes

On November 6 Rich Bond, the departing Republican national chairman, attacked former Delaware Governor Pete du Pont for "an act of absolute political treachery." The crime? Campaigning for GOP chairman before Election Day, thus before President Bush had lost and Bond had announced he'd be stepping down. To punctuate the point, Bond also zinged du Pont as "disloyal, unseemly, and cowardly." Labor Secretary Lynn Martin isn't brimming with happy talk either. Should she fail to win the Republican post, she told an associate, the party will suffer terribly. Why? Because pro-lifers will have imposed their unpopular litmus test on the party again. (Martin's pro-choice.) Not so, says Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition. The GOP's headed for trouble, he argues, if the new chairman won't unapologetically defend the

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party's anti-abortion position. Knuckle under to the Christian right? Never, says Representative Tom Campbell of California. He's so infuriated that he's organizing a new Republican group to combat the Christian Coalition, founded by Pat Robertson.

Vicious as all this sounds, don't take it too seriously. Chances are, there won't be a civil war in the Republican Party. Two fights will attract attention: the battle for GOP chairman and the spat between moderates and born-again Christians. Neither is a clash of titans. The campaign for party chairman involves a tiny electorate, the 165 members of the Republican National Committee. The fate of the party doesn't rest on how they vote. The furor over the religious right involves many more people and deeper emotions. But it will fade as soon as Republicans unite in opposition to something President Clinton does—by mid-1993, in all likelihood. Then the real split in the Clinton-era GOP will become clear. With some overlap, the party will divide into the Dole wing and the Kemp wing.

The Dole-Kemp fault line has been building for years. It helps that Senator Bob Dole and Housing Secretary Jack Kemp don't like each other, but the biggest disagreement is on economics. Dole is a deficit hawk, Kemp a supply-side advocate of tax cuts. "The supply-side thing is important to Dole," says Representative Vin Weber of Minnesota, a Kemp ally. "He wants to stamp out supply-side economics more than Bush did." Dole was skeptical of Reagan's economic policy. Kemp supported it. Dole backed the 1990 budget deal, which included a large tax hike. Kemp bitterly opposed it. Dole liked Bushonomics. Kemp didn't. With Clinton as president, Dole and Kemp will often join in opposition. "Dole may have been on the pro-tax side of Bush, but he'll be on the anti-tax side of Clinton," says Jeff Eisenach of GOPAC. That's where Kemp will be. But their priorities remain different. Dole's chief concern is deficit reduction. Kemp's is tax cuts to spur growth.

If economics were the whole of it, the Dole-Kemp split wouldn't amount to much. There's more. The Dole camp thinks social issues like abortion are harmful and should be avoided, though they don't say so directly. Instead they speak in code. "The Republican Party must be the party of the big tent," Dole told the Republican Governors Association on November 16. "It is the Democratic Party that banned Governor Casey from speaking at their convention. It is a Democrat president who has bluntly stated that there will be litmus tests for judicial nominees. Let them be the party of exclusion, and let us be the party of inclusion.... Our priorities are those of less taxes, less spending, less bureaucracy, and less regulation," he added. Notice he didn't mention fewer abortions as a top priority.

Not that Kemp is a zealot on social issues. On the contrary, he's been accused of being an economic determinist. And Governor Bill Weld of Massachusetts, who's a social liberal, calls himself "a Jack Kemp Republican." But Kemp's wing is far more receptive to social issue conservatives than Dole's is. Kemp's chief allies, Weber and former drug czar William Bennett, are prominent pro-lifers. In fact, a leading GOP social conservative, national committeeman Morton Blackwell of Virginia, sought to persuade Weber to run for party chairman. Weber thought about it, then declined. Now Kemp, Weber, and Bennett are in daily contact. Bennett believes the press has demonized the Christian right. "The concerns expressed by the religious right are the concerns of most Americans," he says. "I spoke to the Christian Coalition. I told them I was a Catholic. They applauded me."

Dole starts with the upper hand. As Senate minority leader, he's the top Republican elected official in the country. For what it's worth, Bush has anointed him as top spokesman. At a dinner Dole hosted on November 10 in honor of Bush, the president declared: "The thing that I've admired and respected about Bob is the way he has, without arrogance, taken on this mantle of leadership.... So people can look to him." What's important is that Dole agrees with Bush's assessment. And his perch in the Senate assures that he'll be a constant presence on T.V. interview shows.

So will Kemp, but he'll have to try harder. He already is. Kemp, Weber, and Bennett are forming the GOP equivalent of the Democratic Leadership Council, the moderate group that groomed Clinton and tugged the party to the center. The new outfit, which may be dubbed the Republican Leadership Council, will have a political action arm and a think tank. Both will promote entrepreneurial capitalism and conservative cultural values. Weber, who's quitting Congress, is the chief organizer of the RLC and is likely to run it (with Kemp as chairman). But he failed to recruit his top picks to head the two RLC branches. He wanted Bill Kristol, Vice President Dan Quayle's chief of staff, to take over the think tank. Kristol balked at joining an organization that's a thinly veiled Kemp front. And Spencer Abraham, the director of the Republican congressional campaign committee, is running for GOP chairman and thus declined the RLC job.

For the next year, the Dole and Kemp wings are likely to concentrate on opposing Clinton, not each other. Once the 1996 presidential race begins—in 1994—they'll gather their forces and clash openly. Bushies, budget balancers, moderates, party types who are Republicans first, conservatives second, and the army of consultants, publicists, and lobbyists in Washington will mostly line up with Dole. Younger Republicans, tax cutters, social conservatives, and the religious right will tilt toward Kemp. Each wing will have a presidential candidate, or candidates. From the Dole wing, there's Senator Phil Gramm of Texas and former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney. From Kemp's side, there's Kemp and maybe Bennett.

The Dole coalition makes sense, but there's a question about the Kemp group. How can yuppie Republicans be expected to get along with born-agains? The answer is that the issues dividing them will loom smaller than they do now. Take abortion. The Freedom of

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Choice Act in some form will probably become law in 1993, changing the political landscape. Like it or not, pro-lifers will have to adjust. "No one's going to try to hold to the 1992 platform," insists Kristol. It called for a constitutional amendment to ban abortions, with no exceptions. After 1993, there will be "a more nuanced debate," says Kristol. Republicans will press for popular amendments to the FOCA restricting abortion on demand. "We'll be in a position to support things with broad appeal," says Weber.

Likewise, the religious right itself will diminish as an issue (but not in size). One reason is leaders like Reed recognize the harm caused in Houston by the notion that Christian rightists were taking over the party. "There were pro-choice and moderate Republicans across the country who were terrified by what they saw or thought they saw," says Eisenach. "Rhetorically, we've got to be inclusive, not exclusive," says Reed. "We don't want to control or take over the Republican Party. We want to be involved in the process." They will be. When the presidential race begins, the Christian right will be more courted than condemned. A Christian Coalition poll on Election Day found that more than 40 percent of Bush voters were "self-identified evangelicals." In the South, the figure was 48 percent.

There's a more important reason why the religious right may grow less threatening. If Republicans discover a coherent message—Bush never had one—born-agains won't be a problem. If the GOP doesn't, they will be. After all, yuppies and Christian rightists got along fine in the Reagan years when the party had a positive message with powerful appeal. That message was initially defined in opposition to President Carter's policies. "I think Bill Clinton's going to be great for curing what ails us," says Trent Lott of Mississippi, the third-ranking Senate Republican. We shall see. •

Republican Mudbath II.

THE RACE CARD

By Tony Snow

As pundits paw over this year's election results, they should ponder an event that should have taken place, but didn't: an overdue revival of the civil rights movement. As this year's election approached, a host of factors—anxiety about the L.A. riots, impatience with racial theatrics in places like New York, and a surge of post-Gulf war idealism—gave both political parties a chance to assert that claim in a new and exciting way. Neither party rose to the occasion.

Since the death of Martin Luther King Jr., the United States has lost its civil rights bearings. Laws have been instituted that encourage division and reward envy. By the 1970s federal judges were redesigning school districts and drawing up business plans. Employers were crafting minority quotas in order to avoid costly lawsuits. The Civil Rights Movement began to degenerate into something Hubert Humphrey promised it would not: "an endless power struggle among organized groups ... a society where there is no place for the independent individual." And whites who had struggled in places like Selma began to mutter about "reverse discrimination."

By this year Democrats had surrendered their monopoly on the minority vote. Black middle-class voters and the civil rights establishment openly advertised their skepticism about Bill Clinton. Although he talked about unity and harmony, he employed legalisms that left conspicuous avenues of escape. Moreover, he delivered the campaign's only racially divisive speech when he spoke to the Rainbow Coalition. His seeming determination to snub Jesse Jackson offended potential admirers. A friend of mine, a conservative black not involved in politics, put it this way: "I don't care what he said about Sister Souljah. That wasn't the point at all. He came to show up Jesse. And even though I don't like Jesse, I hate that kind of grandstanding even more."

Clinton's missteps handed Republicans a major chance to regain the high ground on the civil rights debate. We needed just three things: rhetoric worthy of the moment; actions consistent with the rhetoric; and a Big Tent that would let us assail prejudices without creating new class frictions. We fumbled each.

Take rhetoric. The first rule of racial politics is: show you care. John F. Kennedy set off a sea change in black voting patterns by placing a phone call in 1960 to Coretta Scott King while her husband was in jail. We failed to provide any such acts of concern. President Bush took no trips into embattled black communities outside Los Angeles. Nor did he use black success stories to promote and explain his vision of government. He delivered no significant campaign speeches on race and racial harmony; no speeches to invite black voters into the Republican Party; and no speeches explaining how his policies offered minorities the greatest compliment of all—treatment as capable equals, rather than as members of a victimized class entitled to dribs of pity and drabs of the public fisc. The closest we got to "I have a dream" was to say, "I have a thirteen-point action plan," seasoned with the applause line—"And there is no room for racism, intolerance, or bigotry in this country!"

Republicans could have shattered this political gridlock by saying: enough of this silliness. Let's be honest. Let's talk. Instead, we clumsily courted minority voters. The Republican convention featured blacks primarily as props—candidates, preachers, entertainers, and emissaries from the wildernesses where poor people live. With a few exceptions, we did not celebrate black success or hold up our speakers as role models for our kids.

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Meanwhile, our tortuously ambivalent actions seemed to say: we don't know what we believe. Consider our handling of the Voting Rights Act. In recent years Republicans have joined dozens of court suits designed to create "black" congressional districts. The idea is to persuade courts to create suburban, Republican districts next to the court-ordered minority districts. This tactic not only violates the conservative opposition to quotas; it doesn't work. This year's election did not produce the dramatic swing in congressional seats that our redistricting mavens sought.

We also have fumbled away incredible assets. Clarence Thomas's confirmation victory gave the administration a chance to demand a new pluralism in the civil rights debate. The almost comic discomfort of the Senate Judiciary Committee cleared the way for a challenge to the civil rights orthodoxy and a declaration of intent to revive the spirit of the civil rights movement. A few speech drafts along these lines circulated among senior- and junior-level officials, but nothing reached the president's desk. In the end, President Bush blasted congressional arrogance in what White House insiders called "the process speech," but he did not tackle the grittier issues of race. Instead we chose to play on the Democrats' turf, talking defensively about sexual harassment—and letting Joseph Biden and company off the hook. In our big moment, we chose process over passion.

That wasn't the only fumble. On the night of the Thomas confirmation, we announced agreement on the Civil Rights Act of 1991. Our lawyers worked hard and long to ensure that the bill prosecuted acts of discrimination without coercing businesses to adopt racial quotas for hiring or advancement. But Democrats simply declared victory, implying that we had caved in on quotas. Our silence gave the impression that we had. This made everyone mad. The president's courageous actions thus earned him virtually nothing in terms of political capital.

When Assistant Secretary of Education Michael Williams proposed that the Department of Education abolish race-specific scholarships, he reiterated a natural-rights position as old and venerable as Lincoln. Yet the moment his recommendation attracted hostile fire from the press and pols, we pulled back—said we'd study the recommendation.

Similarly, panic broke out when White House counsel C. Boyden Gray circulated a draft executive order that would forbid quotas in the federal government. The order vanished almost as soon as a hostile bureaucrat leaked it. Williams later advocated reviving the Gray order, with one addition—tripling the budget and staff of those charged with rooting out discrimination within the federal government. Great idea, but it too went nowhere.

We even failed to draw sensible moral lessons from the L.A. riots. At a meeting with the president in Los Angeles, L.A. Mayor Tom Bradley, California Governor Pete Wilson, and Peter Ueberroth all pledged their full support to a comprehensive package of aid and innovation—the kind of "empowerment" package that Jack Kemp has advocated for years. But after Kemp's moment in the spotlight came to an end, the campaign moved on to other things.

Some Republicans remain terminally uncomfortable with issues involving race. One can still find those who regard black Americans as a group apart—poor, exotic, faintly criminal, and not fully equipped for life in polite society. In the grips of remorse, these Republicans act like white liberals: anxious, guilt-besotted, stricken by low self-esteem. They try to expiate their sins by behaving like what Peggy Noonan once called "low-rent Democrats." They try to buy black votes, but at a discount—through welfare funding at slightly reduced values, or pared-down versions of reforms like Kemp's HOPE program.

Conservatives will never win minority votes by masquerading as Democrats. If conservatives wish to regain power, we should point out that politics remains the only arena of American life where people look placidly upon the practice of separate accommodation by race—and we should demand equal accommodation, true inclusion, and common sense. We must return to the Lincoln-King version of civil rights.

This leads to the third failure: the vision thing. The president's politics included everything necessary to pitch a Lee Atwater-style "Big Tent." His conservative proposals on crime, welfare, education, health care, tax regulations, and housing dealt with issues of special concern to blacks, but not exclusively to blacks. More importantly, they placed real power in the hands of individuals, rather than in the mitts of government paper-pushers. School choice would let poor parents choose the schools best for their kids. Welfare reforms would have dismantled the gilded cage that we have constructed for our poor, and eliminate regulations that punish the virtues we normally consider vital for success: hard work, advancement, intact marriage, savings, and property. Housing reforms would give poor people a chance to take the most important step to independence by owning their homes.

Most importantly, the president's agenda treated all people equally. It could have promoted brotherhood instead of a Hobbesian scramble for entitlements and other federal table scraps. Unfortunately, we never pitched the tent. Nor did we draw the proper contrast between our Big Tent and the tent city in which Democrats live—a world of fractious, well-organized, and often mutually exclusive interest groups. This failure was deliberate. Senior advisers argued that we could not win on racial issues, and should just shut up.

So when Bill Clinton snubbed Jesse Jackson, we refused to raise the debate to a higher ground by engaging Clinton on such issues as quotas. A senior official told me, "In politics, you never get in the way when your opponent is destroying himself. Just let Jesse and Clinton carve each other up. Don't get involved, and don't worry. After all, Clinton's *dead*." Others argued

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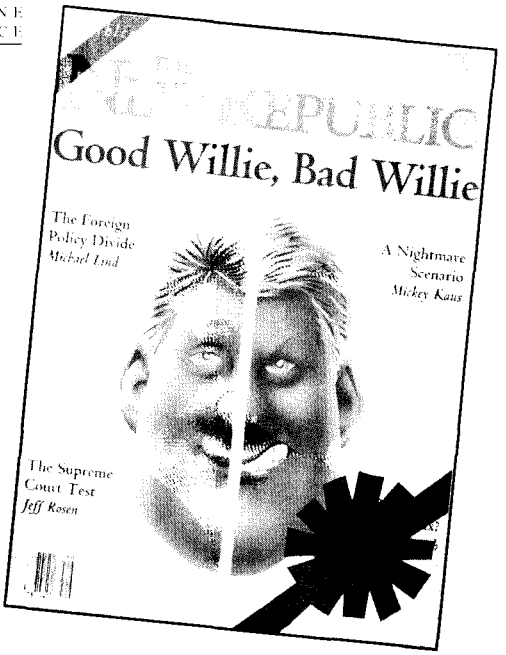

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against courting black voters on grounds that it might alienate part of the Republican "base." This stratagem assumed that the "Bubba" vote—Southern, white, male, conservative—still worshiped at the altar of Jim Crow.

Top White House officials repeatedly rejected suggestions that we deliver identical conservative speeches in "white" and "black" venues, so as to demonstrate that we do not pander. They refused before Super Tuesday, after the L.A. riots, and in the waning days of the campaign. Clinton did adopt the tactic, however, during the Illinois primary.

Our reluctance sometimes bordered on the absurd. Early this year, schedulers turned away a visit request by a national championship athletic team from Jackson State University that wanted to pay its way to the White House—a winning *golf* team. And when the president spoke to his own black appointees during the final month of the campaign, an order from on high decreed that he "say nothing," in order not to interrupt coverage of the day's real news story—automobile insurance reform.

We stayed silent despite the fact that a third of the nation's black population agrees with virtually every item in a typical Republican platform—especially the sections on crime, education, national defense, traditional values, and abortion. More than 90 percent agree with the party's stand on such issues as school choice. Blacks don't reject Republicans because our ideas lack appeal. They reject us because we don't court them, and Democrats do.

This year George Bush gathered a smaller percentage of the black vote than he got in the "Willie Horton" year of 1988, and than Ronald Reagan claimed in 1984. And that was everything: If George Bush had claimed even 20 percent of the black vote, he would be president-reelect today.

TONY SNOW is deputy assistant to the president for media affairs. The opinions expressed in this article are his own.

Republican Mudbath III.

THE EXORCISM

By Michael Lind

Already conservatives are trying to shift the blame for President Bush's loss to the biased media, the poor campaign management, the last-minute Iran-contra indictment, the weak candidate, the German interest rate. They even claim that Bush wasn't conservative enough. Don't believe a word of it. Bush lost because he ran as the candidate of the radical right against two centrists. The results of right-wing economics drove away Reagan Democrats, and right-wing moral zealotry drove away independents and moderate Republicans. Thanks to the far right, the Republicans are now a minority party at all levels of government.

The period of Republican presidential dominance was bracketed by the independent candidacies of two populists, George Wallace and Ross Perot, who belligerently expressed the alienation that middle-class Americans felt from the two parties. Beginning with Nixon, Republicans courted this fickle center by combining economic pragmatism and centrist demagogy. They chose middle-of-the-road "wedge issues" such as defense, law and order, and affirmative action that divided the center from the left while uniting the center and the right. At the same time they assured centrist voters that they would not repeal middle-class programs like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Both Nixon and Reagan, remember, actually expanded the middle-class welfare state.

This Republican centrist strategy was potentially vulnerable either to a centrist Democrat or to an independent populist. In 1976 Republicans confronted the first; in 1992 both Republican nightmares emerged. The midsummer popularity of Perot signaled deep discontent among the Reagan Democrats, independents, and moderates whose votes Bush needed. Bush should have emulated Nixon's and Reagan's strategy and moved aggressively to recapture the political center from his opponents (the right, after all, had nowhere else to go). Instead, he lurched right, allowing the Buchanan brigade and fundamentalists to define the image of the party at the disastrous Republican convention and after, and lost.

Something like this happened once before. Despite what many say, the 1992 race was not much like the race of 1912. The third-party candidacy of Theodore Roosevelt wound up helping Democrat Woodrow Wilson, whereas Clinton was hurt, not helped, by Perot. A better comparison is the 1884 election. In that race, Mugwumps (anti-system radical reformers, like Perotistas) and Half-Breeds (the equivalent of pro-choice moderate Republicans) bolted from a Republican coalition controlled by unprincipled Stalwarts. The desperate Republicans unsuccessfully tried to make a "character issue" of New York Governor Grover Cleveland's out-of-wedlock child. ("Ma, Ma, where's my Pa? Gone to the White House. Ha! Ha! Ha!" the slogan went.)

In 1884, as in 1992, the Republicans ran as the party of Christian moral purity, symbolized by school prayer (then an anti-Catholic wedge issue) and prohibition (the equivalent of the anti-abortion crusade). Just as right-wing Republicans passed out hundreds of thousands of leaflets in 1992 warning that a vote for Clinton was a sin against God, so in 1884 a Protestant preacher warned that Christians could not go "to the Lord's table on Sunday and vote for Cleveland on Tuesday." During

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the campaign, the Republican candidate, James G. Blaine, was introduced by a Protestant clergyman, the Rev. Samuel Burchard, who denounced the Democrats as the party of "Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion." Blaine may have lost the election because of his stubborn refusal to disavow Burchard's insult to key swing voters—Irish and German immigrants, Catholics, and Southerners. Today, in the persons of Pat Buchanan and Pat Robertson, Burchard is born again.

But there is a significant difference between Robertson and Burchard. Though he tries to pass himself off as a mainstream Christian conservative like Billy Graham or Norman Vincent Peale, Robertson's worldview is altogether different from theirs. Robertson's America, like Buchanan's, has fallen victim to subtle treachery and overt conspiracy. As Robertson wrote in his 1991 best seller, *The New World Order*, George Bush and other political leaders are "unknowingly and unwittingly carrying out the mission and mouthing the phrases of a tightly knit cabal whose goal is nothing less than a new order for the human race under the domination of Lucifer and his followers." Robertson believes that world communism and world capitalism have been part of a single vast conspiracy, orchestrated by rich Jews: "In 1902, Paul Warburg," a Federal Reserve Board organizer and "an associate of the Rothschilds ... came to this country as a partner in the powerful Kuhn, Loeb and Company.... The head of Kuhn, Loeb was Jacob Schiff, whose gift of $20 million in gold to the struggling Russian Communists in 1917 no doubt saved their revolution."

How is it that the American Republican Party, which Nixon hoped to make the Middle American majority party, became by 1992 a minority party heavily influenced by Protestant fundamentalists and nativists such as Robertson and Buchanan? The short answer is that the Bush campaign, seeking to mobilize conservative voters, leaned too far to starboard. The long answer is that Goldwater-Reagan conservatism, in battering down moderate Rockefeller Republicanism, has acted as the avant-garde of a demented brand of populism. In the 1970s and 1980s, conservatives, instead of presenting themselves as a new establishment, pretended that they were against establishment. Instead of offering a vision of conservative governance, they denounced government in itself. Instead of stressing their superior credentials and expertise, they praised the uninstructed wisdom of Joe and Jane Six-Pack. Instead of fostering literature and the arts, they warned ominously about the Liberal Cultural Elite. (The new right, it seemed, disapproved of every institution in corrupt America—except the Pentagon, Wall Street, and the grass roots.)

In time, of course, all the strategic populist posturing—the cloying praise of the masses, the anti-intellectualism, the imagery of class war and culture war and wild talk about elite media conspiracies—attracted *real* populists and *real* illiberals, led by Buchanan and Robertson and animated by their twisted fears of the Israel lobby, vulture capitalism, deviant sex, Darwinism, and the Council on Foreign Relations. Though fundamentalists are only a tiny sliver of the electorate, they are politically active and well-coordinated. By outorganizing the mainstream Republicans, the religious right has captured much of the party apparatus at the state and local levels.

If they are not curbed, they may do to the Republicans what followers of William Jennings Bryan did to the Democrats. During the Bryan era, which lasted from the 1890s to the 1920s, the Democratic Party was dominated by fundamentalist Protestants, whose membership overlapped considerably with that of the Ku Klux Klan. Only after the Northeastern urban "wets" behind Al Smith and Franklin Roosevelt broke the power of the Bryanite fundamentalists, prohibitionists, and anti-evolutionists did the Democratic Party's presidential prospects revive. If Theodore Roosevelt had not split the Republican vote in 1912, there might have been an uninterrupted Republican lock on the presidency from the first of three presidential nominations for Bryan in 1896 until 1932, a period of thirty-six years in the wilderness.

The Republican Party faces a similar electoral exile unless the power of the Christian Coalition and the Buchanan Brigades is decisively broken. Many look to Jack Kemp, a humane and appealing conservative, to drag his party back from the lunatic fringe to where the votes are. Kemp must be willing, however, to reject the far right's authoritarian agenda, not merely to criticize its uncouth tone. Massachusetts Governor William Weld, pro-choice, pro-gay rights, and fiscally conservative, is another potential leader of the Republican mainstream.

There are other possibilities: California Governor Pete Wilson, Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson, Senator William Cohen of Maine, Lynn Martin, Bob Dole (who has spoken of a coalition with the Perot voters). The goal of the Republican Clinton must be not to cynically keep Robertson and Buchanan in the closet until the election is over, but to repudiate them altogether. Beyond saving the soul of their party from the Saints, Republican candidates must explain why they want to be in office instead of in the private sector with Bush and Quayle. They must provide a vision of what Republicans can do *with* government, rather than what they can do *to* it.

In a Republican Party that is a big tent, rather than a revival tent, there should be only three litmus tests. Anyone who favors a strong defense, fiscal conservatism, and individual (not collective) civil rights should be welcome as a Republican, rich or poor, management or labor, native or immigrant, white or black, male or female, straight or gay, anti-choice or pro-choice, Christian or Jew or New Age or atheist. The party of emancipation, once emancipated from fundamentalists and nativists, should be an inclusive majority party of the center-right—with the accent once again on *center*.

MICHAEL LIND is executive editor of *The National Interest*.

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LIFE IN BUSH HELL

By James Pinkerton

In the space of a few months earlier this year, readers of this magazine learned of a "Paradigm Regained" (Fred Barnes, April 13) and, alas, a "Paradigm's Loss" (Mickey Kaus, July 27). The only installment missing from this Miltonian cadence is the return to paradise, when those of us rendered meek by the recent election reinherit the earth. We're still hoping.

However, it's worth recounting how the Bush Republicans fell into this state of intellectual nakedness. The administration was, in one sense, quintessentially conservative. Bush has a wistful strain of Burkean traditionalism that led him to reflexively resist the temptation to build on what Ronald Reagan had accomplished, and the Clinton Democrats succeeded in filling the void. Bush didn't exactly pepper his language with allusions to *Reflections*, but his presidency was dominated by a fear of anything rash or radical.

It need never have been that way. Many second- and third-tier Bushies told their betters that a bunkered GOP couldn't survive the post-cold war era. Lee Atwater reread *The Prince* every year. We came from a very different tradition—not "conservative," but right-wing. Atwater was an in-your-face politico who thought the purpose of politics was to *win*, not just avoid losing. His favorite phrase was "keep movin'," a vernacular take on Whitman. Like Reagan, another anti-conservative conservative, he was happy to begin the world over again—as he would put it, "anytime, anywhere, with anybody." And he had seen the post-Reagan dilemma coming.

Atwater called me into his office in January 1985. He had signed on with Bush, and there was no time to waste—the presidential election was just forty-six months away. "Bush does not have an operation that is capable of taking over the country," he told me, outlining his plan for electing Bush in 1988. Atwater thought Bush lacked a "post-Reagan vision," and that Jack Kemp and Gary Hart, respectively, were already way ahead. Figuring that Bush wouldn't enjoy reading about Kemp's virtues, Atwater and I put together "Gary Hart's Long March," a memo describing the Colorado Democrat's idea-driven campaign.

JAMES PINKERTON, former counselor to Bush-Quayle '92, is a senior fellow at the John Locke Foundation.

Four years later, Bush was president. We never did get too far with the "vision thing," but we did leaven the negatives ("read my lips," Willie Horton) with some positives ("kinder, gentler," "education president"). I was Bush's "deputy assistant for policy planning," a title another aide and I cooked up over lunch at a Roy Rogers on Connecticut Avenue. The president's February 9, 1989, address to a joint session of Congress outlined his plan for "Building a Better America." That sounded good, but I was struck by the incrementalism of the gerunds that littered the oration: "managing," "ordering," "maintaining." A few days later I wrote an earnest memo to my new boss, domestic policy adviser Roger B. Porter, arguing that Bush's challenge was not just to hold ground, but to *gain* ground. The economic issue would be neutralized, I said, unless the thrice-thrashed Democrats were dumb enough to propose a tax increase. (They weren't *that* dumb, as it turned out.) "We have to seek new issues that provide us with new opportunities and expand our coalition," I wrote. "Old GOP priorities of the '70s and '80s will have to give way to new GOP priorities: the poor, children's issues, the environment."

I was no "squish," to use the derisive Reaganite idiom. I believed that all this new activism could and should be fit within our self-imposed framework of no tax or net spending increase. The Scylla of "kinder, gentler" and the Charybdis of "no new taxes" would force us to think anew: about restructuring, innovation, "reinventing" government. Private-sector organizations were being transformed by international competition. They were changing not because they wanted to, but because they *had* to. I thought the same thing should start happening in the public sector. Influenced by Kemp's "bleeding-heart conservatism," I added: "Reform has a *moral component.* It implies that there are wrongs to be righted, not just inefficiencies to be corrected."

I never got a response. Naively convinced I was doing Bush's will, I gave a speech to the Reason Foundation in early 1990 in which I touted "The New Paradigm," a strategy for post-bureaucratic government defined by five principles: the global market, empowerment, choice, decentralization, and a principled, bottom-line commitment to what works. It seemed to me that at the end of the '80s, a post-Reagan, post-Tip O'Neill consen-

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sus had developed around a reasonable set of social goals: education, housing, health care, environmental protection. Americans agreed that we weren't going to throw people into the snow, but we also agreed we weren't going to build socialism. If this consensus on goals could be articulated, then the debate could shift to technique—the practical questions of actually making things work.

This new consensus would render the old debate obsolete. Republicans would stop calling for the rollback of the welfare state, freeing the Democrats from their obligation to guard against a bureaucratic domino effect that would topple the whole New Deal-Great Society edifice. If the Bush administration led the way, I figured, we could move from rhetoric to results. I argued that if this "new paradigm" were energetically adopted, we'd beat the party of compassion at their own game.

I didn't get far in the West Wing, but I did get the ear of the speechwriters. My words found their way into a 1990 Bush speech: "When old centralized bureaucracies are crumbling, the time has come for yet another paradigm ... a model which rejects the view that progress is measured in money spent and bureaucracies built." It was a throwaway talk to a bunch of conservatives that didn't even make the next day's *Washington Post*, but now "our new paradigm" was a certified Bushism. That presidential sanction may well have saved my job when the Old Paradigm came after me.

Atwater could have helped Bush make the paradigm shift from the Reagan era. Most people remember him only as a swaggering, stop-at-nothing attack virtuoso. All true, but he also understood the sustaining link between politics and culture. He read Dos Passos's *USA* and *Bright Lights, Big City* with equal interest, marking and underlining the parts he liked, clutching a Bic pen in his fist like a child with a crayon. He was obsessed with generational change, and saw that his fellow baby boomers would think and vote differently in the '90s.

I remember having lunch with him a year or so after he became chairman of the Republican National Committee, listening to him lay out his plan for changing the GOP platform. Atwater saw the need for a post-Reagan synthesis of low taxes and more effective government. Rejecting "bigger as better" as "the old politics," Atwater's solution was "quality" government that would help more and intrude less. The fixed variable in his strategy was what he called the GOP's "fortress"—strong foreign policy and opposition to tax increases. This would keep the right happy. As a Southerner, Atwater was hung up on Civil War imagery. "As long as we hold the high ground," he said, "we can maneuver on this other stuff."

Drawing by Vint Lawrence for The New Republic

Lee's first brain seizure was on March 5, 1990. Three months later, in an effort to open deficit reduction negotiations with Congress, Bush broke his no-new-taxes pledge, and agreed in advance to "tax revenue increases." Giving to Democrats up front what they wanted was perhaps not the smartest negotiating strategy, but every tragic tale needs its fatal mistake. OMB director Richard Darman's 1990 budget deal has two squadrons of defenders: partisan Democrats and editorial board good-government types. The enthusiasm of the former is understandable: as Napoleon said, never interfere with the enemy when he is in the process of destroying himself. But the goo-goos should know better, because the budget deal didn't even work on its own anti-political terms. Only its authors could love a plan that raised taxes, raised pork-barrel spending, froze everything else in place, raised the deficit, *and* prolonged the recession.

The 629-page Omnibus Budget and Reconciliation Act attempted to establish a new bureaucratic order, subsuming all federal activities for the next five years. It paralyzed politics, frustrating the activist left as well as the activist right. Intended as the apotheosis of Kennedy School technocracy, OBRA was a decadent orchid, a *fleur de mal*. Even policies

continued on page 26

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that didn't involve spending money, such as school choice and deregulation, were tangled up in its snake-like tendrils. The deal was so cryptologically complicated that Darman needed the continuous cooperation of congressional Democrats to keep the fragile creation alive. So while the budget chief spun the media, OMB enforcers worked with the Democrats to break the fingers of any Republican who had the temerity to suggest anything new. Even after the recession began, the deficit increased, and the Soviet Union collapsed, the administration line was that nothing should change. John Sununu boasted in late 1990 that Congress could just go home, that Bush wouldn't need it for anything. How could we fault people for thinking we didn't have a domestic policy when the White House chief of staff said that we *shouldn't* have one?

As governor of New Hampshire, Sununu was an activist. My first exposure to him was while riding along in the back of a motorcade during the '88 New Hampshire primary campaign. Like every Granite State Republican, Sununu was a firm adherent to the no-income-tax "Pledge," but I was startled to hear him talk about schools, mental hospitals, and homeless shelters he had built and reformed in his six years in the Concord Statehouse. He had an engineer's sensibility—he enjoyed talking about problem-solving. (And yes, his I.Q. is as high as they say: he really could multiply a six-digit number by six-digit number in his head.) Sununu was a genius in search of another genius. He came to Washington and met Mr. Right—the 1600 SAT megabrain, Dick Darman.

How could someone who hated taxes and loved activism come to embrace a pact that institutionalized the opposite? Sununu reminded me of Colonel Nicholson in *The Bridge on the River Kwai.* Alec Guiness's manically self-righteous British officer becomes so consumed by his need to trump his Japanese captors that he slave-drives his men into building them a better bridge than they could have built for themselves. George Mitchell and Tom Foley must have relished the spectacle of Sununu and Darman laboring to build something that pleased only Democrats.

Darman's elitism, control freakery, and fetish for deal-making evoked echoes of Henry Kissinger, another smart player obsessed with secrecy. But the joke was on him: Darman orchestrated a multivariate, gothically nuanced surrender when the Republicans were *winning!* Bob Teeter once told me, "Jim Baker was smart enough to know that he needed a Dick Darman. But Darman wasn't smart enough to know that he needed a Baker." Meaning: Baker wasn't threatened by whip-smart subordinates; Darman lacked the character and judgment to be the top decision-maker. At the OMB, there's only one way to make a name for yourself, and that way is the way of the budget deal.

The only domestic Bushman to gain stature in the aftermath of the budget was Jack Kemp, the idealist who was convinced that he was doing what was right even as Darman's noose was being slipped around his neck. Kemp was named chairman of the Economic Empowerment Task Force the same week Iraq invaded Kuwait. That bad luck aside, Kemp was still unable to elbow his agenda into Bush speeches and legislation. Like Reagan, Kemp disdained briefing books. He believed in the power of the illustrative anecdote. His idea of prepping his little crew of do-gooder nerds for a meeting with the president was to urge us to think up compelling tales of empowerment that would rouse the president out of what Kemp called "Social Darmanism." In the meeting, Bush leaned back in his chair and chewed absently on the stem of his eyeglasses.

The last thing Darman wanted was another domestic superstar rivaling him. Empowerment was reverse Darmanism—looking at the world from the bottom up instead of the top down. Darman methodically expunged the word "empowerment" from the Bush lexicon—with no evident protest from Bush. Soon the Empowerment Task Force was removed from the West Wing's prestigious Roosevelt Room and drop-kicked up to Room 476 in the Old Executive Office Building, down the hall from the Secret Service lounge.

Darman didn't much care for me either. A week after his speech lampooning the notion of a "new paradigm," Darman showed up at a meeting of the "working group" of the Empowerment Task Force—one link above intern fire-safety briefings in the great chain of bureaucratic being. Callow jaws dropped as his booming voice blasted through our twittering. "It's ridiculous to think of a 'new paradigm,'" he said, rattling off his accomplishments in the Nixon-Ford years. I was smart enough to keep my mouth shut during his half-hour tirade, figuring that if I said anything in response, the meeting would be recorded as "a shouting match," and I would be chastised by my superiors for rumbling.

The Empowerment Task Force died a quiet little death during the self-congratulatory jubilee of Bush's Desert Storm popularity. When Bush was at 90 percent popularity, he strode masterfully into a Capitol full of servile lawmakers and threw down the gauntlet: he would settle for nothing less than ... a transportation bill and a crime bill. Sununu and Darman were proud of this feat of pragmatic understatement. Their view was that if they didn't give Congress anything to do, there wouldn't be anything to screw up. The irony of the last four years is that Republican "pragmatism"—an ethos of bet-hedging, blame-shifting, and self-exculpation—turned out to be profoundly *unpragmatic.*

Peggy Noonan was one of the first to see that the downward trend of Bush's poll ratings from their Schwarzkopfian apex might continue, even accelerate. Comparing Bush to Churchill in an October 1991 memo to Teeter, she wrote: "The Republicans too may be undone by their triumph." At home, "Our great message was We Will Keep Your Taxes Down and Cut the Size of Government—and the past four years we have done neither. Really, there is no reason for them to vote for us now."

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Not long after, James Carville, using Harris Wofford as a decoy, defeated Dick Thornburgh in the contest for Pennsylvania's Senate seat. Still, no domestic agenda emerged. Its absence became dramatically apparent after the Los Angeles riots. The predicted right-wing backlash never materialized. People worried instead that under Republicans, the country was falling apart. Coincidence had me in Los Angeles when the city was on fire. Holed up in my hotel room, I watched hour after hour of live coverage on every channel. It hit me: after thirty years of Great Society programs and twenty-five years of law and order, America had nothing. I thought of FDR's Depression-era activism. Later I looked up the quote: "It is common sense to take a method and try it; if it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something."

Sitting in an airport lounge, I watched T.V. as Rodney King pleaded for calm. That tore it. I called Teeter and First Son George W. Bush from a nearby pay phone. "The president needs to get on T.V., and he needs to get out here," I said. We were all thinking alike, but as Teeter reminded me, the White House did not have a bias for action. Pushing my luck, I ventured my own remedy: "There's only one government institution that anyone has any confidence in, and that's the one that we're about to shrink: the military. Instead of laying off all these drill sergeants and shutting down all these bases, why not bring back the Civilian Conservation Corps?" George Jr. bought the argument immediately. The next morning he called his father, and then called me back. The president was unenthusiastic: "Isn't this the sort of thing that we're fighting against?"

Back in D.C., I used every argument I could think of. I reminded my colleagues that we're spending $250 billion a year fighting poverty now and not getting any credit for it. Fred Steeper of BQ'92 "Strategic Information" (polling) was a slave to his numbers. In the parlance, he was "data-driven." He said that out of a list of possible initiatives, from building an anti-immigration wall across the U.S.-Mexico border to national health insurance, the CCC idea polled No. 1. Brandishing his cross-tabs, I barnstormed around the headquarters, interrupting phone calls and crashing meetings: "If we could just get Bush to some military base to visit a few hundred former Crips and Bloods, now wearing green T-shirts, doing something productive, that would be worth more politically than adding another zero to the dollar total of our urban aid package."

Darman, who reached the pinnacle of his power during the brief Sam Skinner interregnum (the nine months, after Sununu was fired, that Skinner kept Baker's West Wing chair warm), dismissed the CCC idea as "Communist." Campaign manager Fred Malek called Defense Secretary Dick Cheney to pitch the idea in my presence. Malek didn't get through. Later I heard back that the Pentagon didn't like it. Of course the generals didn't like it. They were too busy preparing for the Big One. Over the next few weeks, my CCC ranting pretty much ended my effectiveness at the Bush campaign. People got tired of hearing me sputter: "We have to have a plan. This is my plan. If you hate my plan, fine. But what's YOUR plan?"

There was no plan—except to throw the kitchen sink at Clinton. The campaign, addled by the seductions of Beltway empire-building, actually attacked the Democrats for proposing to cut 100,000 bureaucrats from the federal payroll. Losing sight of the widening public-sector chasm between tax inputs and policy outcomes, we bashed Clinton for not spending enough on Arkansas's children. We were so busy trafficking in trivia that we let Clinton's eighteen-wheeler of proposed tax and spending increases speed right on through.

Yes, Bush broke New Paradigm hearts. But it was in his administration that some N.P. ideas got a tryout. I have never been so proud to be a Republican as I was when I represented his campaign to the National Association of Resident Management Corporations last September. I sat with public housing empowerer Kimi Gray, listening to narratives of struggle against the bureaucratic overseers of the Great Society. The upwardly mobile poor of NARMC are almost all Democrats, but they love Kemp: he would have easily defeated Clinton in a voice vote. The people opposing resident empowerment initiatives, the public housing bosses, are Democrats too. They hated Kemp for what he was trying to do. All of them voted for Bill Clinton, and all of them will want something in return for their support. Clinton will be confronted with a long and agonizing battle between new ideas and an old coalition. He must now prove that "a different kind of Democrat" is more than just a way of saying, "I can win."

Right now the Republicans aren't much of a threat to Clinton, because Darmanism robbed us of our credibility as compassionate and thoughtful stewards of the public trust. As Kemp says, "People don't care that you know until they know that you care." But what if we changed? Having seen their old gods fail them in 1992, salvation-minded GOPers are certain to seek political redemption in new ideas. Smart Republicans recognize that the end of the cold war means that it is time to come home to our Lincolnian roots as the party of activist domestic reform. We reason that the Real Majority cares about a centrist cluster of core goals: economic growth, as well as education, health care, and the overall quality of life. New Paradigm Republicans and New Paradigm Democrats agree on the same goals—thus the only thing left to argue about is *technique*.

In a changing world, it's hard to argue against change. "Nothing lasts forever," said Willy Brandt on his deathbed. "Every era demands its own answers, and if one wants to do good, one must be prepared for them." Americans are an optimistic, practical-minded people. They will choose whichever party builds a better political mousetrap. For these reasons, we are not "swallow'd up in endless misery." I even look forward to a future TNR headline: "Paradigm Loser: Why Mickey Kaus, Neoliberal Agonistes, Should Be Working for the GOP." •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

The Haunted and the Hunted

Ever since the first two *Godfather* films in the early 1970s, Francis Ford Coppola has been trying hard to keep his career on track. The success of those Mafia films gave him a large license, but he has simply blundered it away. *Apocalypse Now*, though laced with dazzle, is a monument of grandiosity. The third *Godfather* (which I liked more than most others did) was hobbled by, among other troubles, the use of Coppola's daughter in a leading role. The utter blanks that he has fired in the last twenty years—*One from the Heart, Rumble Fish, The Cotton Club, Gardens of Stone, Tucker*, and others—all blend into one desperate signal of distress.

Now comes **Bram Stoker's Dracula** (Columbia) to confirm the vacancy of the career—no, of the man. He is not an artist who has made mistakes: he's a journeyman worker, with some skills, who has occasionally stumbled across a good project. But the basic Coppola is like Gertrude Stein's reported description of Oakland, California: "There is no *there* there."

Coppola's version of the much-exploited novel cascades onto the screen with millions of dollars' worth of special effects and sumptuous costumes. The cinematography, by the exceptional Michael Ballhaus, struggles to keep abreast of the flood. The torrent is whipped along with the score by Wojciech Kilar, a second-rate Penderecki (and first-rate Penderecki is garish enough). All this visual and aural bombast produces a picture sorely muddled in narrative. The overall result is like that of the giant cannon in Chaplin's *Shoulder Arms*; when it's fired, a shell slithers out of the muzzle and plops at the cannon's base.

Stoker's name is included in the title because Coppola says his film is closer to the original novel than any previous adaptation. That may be—I've never read it and now never will. But a chief reason for his fidelity, says Coppola, was to retain the eroticism of the book that others have scanted. Well, if this be eroticism, me for the monastery. Bare bosoms are occasionally visible, plentiful writhings, suggestions of varied penetrations, but everything remotely sexual is so glitzily and consciously packaged that it all remains up there on the screen, leagues distant from the viewer. I've never felt *less* while watching a film.

The outline of the familiar story is hazily visible. A young Englishman, Harker (Keanu Reeves), visits Transylvania to settle some business matters with Count Dracula (Gary Oldman). This visit soon involves Harker's fiancée (Winona Ryder) back in London, where much of the action occurs. Dracula is one of the undead, a vampire. The film's ending brings relief to the undead, which by that time includes the audience.

Coppola says he cast Reeves as Harker because he wanted a heartthrob who would draw young women. I hope so, because that's about all that Reeves draws. He behaves like a quite nice high-school boy in the senior class production of *Dracula*. Ryder matches him perfectly. Oldman brings some color and hints of depth to the Count, but he never suggests the centuries-long torment and longing of corny old Bela Lugosi in the part.

Two performances stand out. Anthony Hopkins, whose name in a cast is as good a reason as most for seeing a film, plays the Dutch Dr. Van Helsing with an errant accent but with some fiber and fun. And Tom Waits is surprisingly fine as Renfield; he provides the few moments when the film almost touches us. Renfield is the Englishman who preceded Harker to Transylvania, came back crazed, and is now in a padded cell, eating insects and raving about his vampire master. Waits has not a spurious split-second. It's as if all the cast had been given character outlines to fill in and he was the only one who did the job thoroughly.

Waits is a man of parts—more accurately, of more than his parts. He began his career as a composer-singer and has made thirteen albums. He began acting in 1979 and has been in four Coppola films, among others. He was in Jim Jarmusch's *Down by Law*, and he wrote the score for Jarmusch's *Night on Earth*. He collaborated with the distinguished theater artist Robert Wilson on an opera that was done in Hamburg in 1990, and, with Wilson, he has done an *Alice in Wonderland* that is forthcoming in Hamburg. Add these matters to a performance here that is imagined rather than copied from dusty models and Waits becomes a man to have hopes about.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Glengarry Glen Ross. *David Mamet's excellent play diminishes slightly by being adapted to the screen, but, powerfully acted, it is still a major work. (Reviewed 10/26/92)* **Intervista.** *Federico Fellini's dazzler, made in 1987 and too long delayed. Done mostly at Cinecittà, where Fellini is being interviewed, it explodes with wonderful pyrotechnics, wonderful rue, wonderful wit. (12/7/92)* **Simple Men.** *Hal Hartley's third feature confirms that this young American writer-director has his own skewed but illuminating view of what's happening around him. Quietly humorous, delicately made. (11/9/92)* **Van Gogh.** *Maurice Pialat's unique approach reminds us that no subject is tired if the vision of it is fresh. Jacques Dutronc is movingly bemused as the painter, a man not quite among us even in his last sixty-seven days on earth. (11/30/92)* **—SK**

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Coppola's long-term sponsorship of Waits makes a further comment necessary. Many film people of Coppola's generation—writers, directors, actors—have spoken warmly of his generosity and help. This, by a long shot, is not nothing, especially in the film world. But neither does it help his *Dracula*.

Neil Jordan, the Irish-born writer-director who made *Mona Lisa*, had ideas for three different pictures, and he put them all into one picture called **The Crying Game** (Miramax). First, there's a film about a black English soldier taken hostage by IRA terrorists, who is to be executed in three days if the British don't release an IRA prisoner. It's a familiar sort of one-act play between a prisoner (Forest Whitaker) and his guard (Stephen Rea). (This film cops out on its ending with a clumsy trick.) The second film is about Rea, who has fled to London, and his romance with a black hairdresser (Jaye Davidson) who had been Whitaker's sweetheart. (This film, too, ends with a trick, but it has its valid disturbances.) The third film is about the IRA again. They hunt Rea down in London and force him again into action. (A strong echo here of *A Prayer for the Dying* with Mickey Rourke.)

Jordan would like us to believe that the three films are stages in a metamorphosis, but the stitching shows. Part One is stale and finishes cravenly. Part Two, which has Rea wooing the hairdresser in an apartment hung with pictures of the soldier for whose death he was responsible, stirs up some drama, but it has no relationship to Rea's drama in Part One. Part Three is as stale as Part One. Further, the whole film seems to assume a sympathy for the IRA that even a good many Irish people, north and south, do not share.

Part Two, explored and expanded, might have made a good film, especially since Davidson gives a quiet, knowledgeable, perfectly poised performance. But a new male lead would be needed. Rea underplays in a way that makes his performance rely on personality; and his, alas, is dim. Instead of partaking of his woes as we are meant to do, we keep wondering what Davidson sees in him. •

Some unexpected truths about the American West.

Gunslingers and Bureaucrats

By John Mack Faragher

"A settler pushes west and sings his song," read the lines of Ronald Reagan's second inaugural address. "It is the American sound: it is hopeful, bighearted, idealistic—daring, decent, and fair. That's our heritage, that's our song. We sing it still. For all our problems, our differences, we are together as of old." Western political metaphors may not be as potent now as they were in the 1980s, but the frontier myth still thrives, to judge from the recent successes of Hollywood. "The western is back," *The New York Times* announced this past summer. There may be little prospect of a return to those thrilling days of yesteryear when oaters amounted to nearly a third of all Hollywood films, but the genre's renaissance is clear from Clint Eastwood's success with *Unforgiven*, along with the popularity of other recent westerns such as *Young Guns*, *Lonesome Dove*, and *Dances with Wolves*.

For a century now, the belief that "westering" defines our unique national heritage, and that it amounted to the purest expression of American idealism, has been what the late historian Warren Susman called "the official American ideology." It has been played out in a fascinating interchange of ideas and images among movies, popular history, and political rhetoric. The original master of ceremonies for this discourse, of course, was the showman William Cody, or "Buffalo Bill," whose wild West barnstormed America and the world for more than thirty years around the turn of the century, turning western style and action, and a particular idyll about American destiny, into one of the most bankable commodities in show business.

The intellectual legitimation of Cody's images was eventually provided by the historian Frederick Jackson Turner, who first codified a coherent theory of the importance of the western past in 1893,

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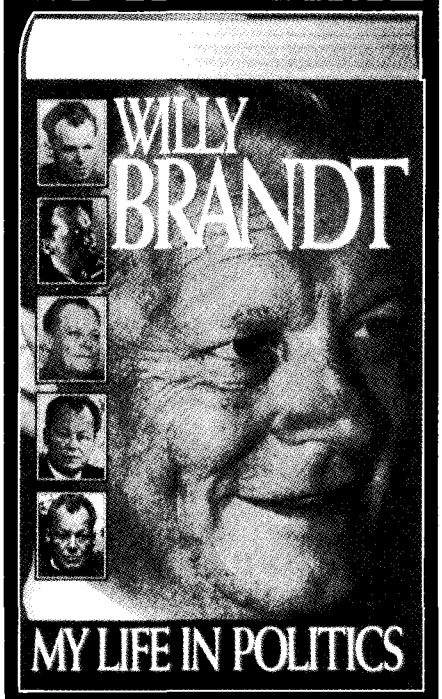
A POLITICIAN AHEAD OF HIS TIME



MY LIFE IN POLITICS

By the time he was nineteen his precocious political activities had so angered the Nazis that he had to flee Germany. For the first time, but not the last, Willy Brandt was on the "wrong" side. As usual he saw farther than his enemies. This illuminating political autobiography recounts the highs and lows of his career, from his dream of German reunification to the East German spy scandal, and looks forward to the ultimate triumph of his ideas—a united Europe.
32 pages of photographs.

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pulling together, as Theodore Roosevelt wrote in an admiring letter to the young professor, "a good deal of thought that has been floating around rather loosely." According to Turner's thesis, westward expansion was the very marrow of the American experience, the crucible in which an individualistic character was formed in a confrontation between "savagery and civilization." The movement westward secured political and social democracy by the availability of free land, and economic growth was fueled by successive frontier bonanzas. Roosevelt himself employed Turner's ideas and Cody's floridity in several popular books such as *The Winning of the West*, and he was the first to demonstrate the political utility of western images, borrowing the name of his cavalry regiment during the Spanish-American War, for example, from the "Congress of Rough Riders," which was an act in Cody's show.

The myth of the frontier seemed to explain America to itself. It joined a version of the past with a program for the future: just as the frontier was essential to our becoming who we were, so we required "new frontiers" to guarantee our continued development. The left as well as the right employed this distinctive American ideology. "There was no more free land," Franklin Roosevelt declared during the presidential campaign of 1932, so gone were the days when "there was always the possibility of climbing into a covered wagon and moving west." Now Americans were faced with "the soberer, less dramatic business of administering resources, of distributing wealth and products more equitably." Accepting the Democratic nomination in Los Angeles in 1960, John F. Kennedy talked of the "new world here in the West" built by "the pioneers of old," and coined the phrase that would label his administration when he called on Americans "to be pioneers on a New Frontier."

So Reagan's appeal to western images had the benefit of precedent. But a problem remained. While the historian's thesis lent a certain intellectual credibility to political rhetoric, it long ago found its way onto the trash heap of historical interpretations. The classical connection of western history, popular culture, and political rhetoric no longer holds; it is really nothing more than a form of nostalgia, an expression of the need for a sacred iconography. The revision of western history has been under way for quite some time. It is only in recent years, however, that commanding new overviews have begun to appear. The historians Richard White, Donald Worster, William Cronon, and Richard Slotkin provide provocative new ways of understanding the history of the American West. But it remains to be seen whether the revisionist historiography of the West can move beyond demystification and debunking.

White's book, the most comprehensive of the recent western histories, is the first new general history of the West to appear in two decades. The author of numerous books and articles on western history, including the influential *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (1983), White brings the qualifications of an experienced historian to this work of synthesis. His book is a sweeping narrative as well as a summary of the most recent scholarship. It may be too prodigious to be digested whole, and many readers may prefer to turn to it for succinct accounts that frequently run against the grain of received truth.

"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A History of the American West
by Richard White
(University of Oklahoma Press, 644 pp., $39.95)

Under Western Skies: Nature and History in the American West
by Donald Worster
(Oxford University Press, 292 pp., $27.50)

Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West
by William Cronon
(W. W. Norton, 530 pp., $15.95 paper)

Gunslinger Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America
by Richard Slotkin
(Atheneum, 826 pp., $40)

They will learn, for example, that Indian tribes like the Crows and the Pawnees sided with Americans in the plains wars because they considered the expanding Sioux a greater threat to themselves; that armed showdowns between lawmen and outlaws were rare events, but social violence was a fundamental part of western society, evident in recurrent episodes of vigilantism, social banditry, anti-Chinese riots, conflicts between cattlemen and sheep herders, and class warfare in mining communities; that homesteading in the late nineteenth century added fewer than 15,000 new farms each year, while the national population grew annually by more than 1 million people, and that rural-to-urban migration was much more significant.

White's most important contribution, however, is the detail that he brings to his sustained argument about the shaping impact of the American central government on the history of the West. The frontier myth portrayed the West as the region of self-reliance, but White argues very arrestingly that "more than any other region" the West "has been historically a dependency of the federal government." Before the Civil War, Washington's power was subordinate to the states. Only in the territorial West, therefore, was the federal government really able to flex its muscles. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Land Office, and the Interior Department were primarily western agencies; the Army's principal mission was supervising Indian removal and waging the war of territorial conquest against Mexico. The West, in one of White's most memorable phrases, was "the kindergarten of the American state."

After 1865, with federal power magnified a hundred times by the victory over the Confederacy, Washington directed the wars against the western Indians, distributed western lands to homesteaders and railroad companies (a subsidy for the construction of transcontinental lines), and operated the territorial system. "The federal government administered much of the American West as a colony of the United States," says White, and it seized that opportunity to construct much of the region's political and economic infrastructure. Even after the coming of statehood, Washington's unprecedented hold on the West continued, most importantly through the control of public lands. Today 47 percent of the lands of the eleven western-most states of the nation remain in the hands of federal agencies like the National Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Bureau of Land Management.

This notion of the concentration of power as one of the controlling characteristics of western history is developed by Donald Worster in *Under Western Skies*, a collection of essays that rearticulate and broaden the arguments he made in his previous studies of the West—*Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* (1979) and *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West* (1985), which are also cutting-edge environmental histories. Emerson's old complaint that the West was "all out of doors" has been turned into credo by environmental historians like Worster. Two dominant "ecological modes," in Worster's phrase, have made the West distinctive: the pastoral and the hydraulic, or in plain language, ranching and irrigation agriculture.

Spanish colonists first introduced livestock to the West, but the Indians adapted domestic animals to their own

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use. The native peoples of the plains, for example, soon became mounted hunters and warriors. In south Texas during the early nineteenth century, Mexican herding traditions merged with those of arriving Americans to produce the ranching system that spread throughout the western plains following the Civil War. Thus the legendary cowboys and Indians of the plains were both characteristic figures of western ecological adaptation. From its beginnings, however, the range cattle industry was dominated by big players who directed their major effort at driving out the little man. In incidents such as the Johnson County War in Wyoming in 1892, stock growers hired gunmen to rid them of small-fry competitors. In the twentieth century, cattlemen have been joined by officials of the Bureau of Land Management who determine the usage of the vast public range.

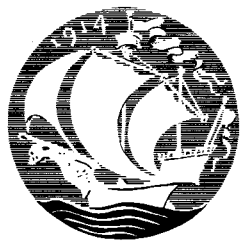
Worster's other ecological mode, irrigation farming, has a much longer history in the West. Two thousand years ago Indians were already diverting water from the Colorado River to raise their crops, and irrigation played an important role in the civilization of the Anasazi, ancestors of the Pueblos, who built the mysterious cliff dwellings in the vicinity of the Four Corners. Worster's primary concern, however, is with western water systems of the twentieth century. Settling and farming the arid West proved simply too much for pioneers with ordinary resources, and urban development required water diversion on a monumental scale. "If we don't get the water, we won't need it," William Mulholland, czar of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, declared in 1907; "we have got to have water or quit growing."

It required massive capital and modern engineering skills to move rivers and to build dams, and then to manage these complex systems. The result, Worster argues, has been "concentrations of wealth and power, rule by expertise, dependency on government and bureaucracy." Capital-intensive irrigation agriculture, moreover, required a large pool of workers to provide unskilled, seasonal labor, roles filled in the modern West by legal and illegal migrants from Mexico, thus further involving the federal government. Even as Hollywood nurtured images of rugged western individualism, the film community that nestled in the arid Southern California hills was sustained by bureaucratic systems that, according to Worster, "best [exemplify] the modern capitalist state at work."

Dependent on federal largess, many westerners complained about the control of eastern bureaucrats and capitalists, but rarely have these protests been more than rhetorical exercises. In the 1930s Walter Prescott Webb, Bernard DeVoto, and Joseph Kinsey Howard were prominent among those arguing that the West was (in DeVoto's words) "a plundered province" victimized by outsiders, "looted, betrayed, sold out." More recently, during the so-called Sagebrush Rebellion of the 1980s, western state legislators, working in conjunction with Reagan's Department of the Interior, attempted to secure the privatization of the West's public lands. These movements ultimately failed. The reason was that most westerners recognize Washington's continuing contribution to western development. Indeed, as White summarizes the consensus among western historians, it was federal investment during the New Deal that created the modern West. That period witnessed the great civil engineering projects of the water empire, and during World War II more federal capital was invested in western military industries than those of any other region. After the war, transportation and housing subsidies dramatically shaped the growth of western cities and suburbs. "The endless miles of private homes that spread over the West," writes White, "were just as much products of federal policies as were multipurpose dams and national forests."

In the popular image perpetuated by the western, the West is a region of scattered populations and rural isolation. This, too, is a fiction. As White points out, the West was, as early as 1880, the most highly urbanized region in the country, with booming cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle, and Denver holding sway over vast hinterlands. A number of historians have called attention to the urban dimensions of the American frontier. No previous study, however, has explored them with the sophistication of William Cronon in *Nature's Metropolis*, which takes him westward from the topic of his previous book, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (1983). Arguing that "the history of the Great West is a long dialogue between the place we call city and the place we call country," Cronon sets out to illuminate the linkages between the development of the trans-Mississippi West and the city of Chicago.

"Chicago became the link that bound the different worlds of east and west into a single system," Cronon writes; "it was where the West began." He shows that the city and the trans-Mississippi West developed in tandem, the terms of devel-



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opment for both set by the growth of the railroad during the 1850s. Rail lines spread west of Chicago in an arterial fan, carrying the produce of forest, farm, ranch, and mine back to eastern markets and manufactured goods out to western consumers. The Chicago Board of Trade received its first legal charter in 1859, and farmers were soon moving across the Mississippi, plowing the tallgrass prairies to raise corn and wheat. The Union Stock Yards of south Chicago opened for business in 1865, and the following year found cowboys driving the first herds north from Texas to the railroad towns of Kansas.

By 1860 the lumber district along the Chicago River had become the center for western distribution. Loggers were soon cutting into northern forests, converting white pine to boards, and farmers and ranchers were soon hammering the lumber together to build the farm and ranch houses on the treeless plains. Montgomery Ward & Co. began operations in 1872, and pioneers in their Nebraska soddies and Dakota tar-paper shacks were soon poring over its mail-order catalog and receiving shipments of furnishings from its Chicago warehouses. By 1880 Chicago dominated trade "as far as the eastern borders of the states of California and Oregon," reported an awe-struck federal economist, "an area constituting more than one-half of the territorial limits of the United States."

The "Gateway City" thus directed the transformation of western America. "Chicago was remote from all of these events," says Cronon, "and yet no place is more central to understanding why they occurred." In several compelling chapters he details the transformation of merchandising, farming, and lumbering, but perhaps the most revealing is the story Cronon tells about meat. The destruction of the huge buffalo herds occurred simultaneously with the spread of cattle from Texas; natural migration gave way to human-directed movement, from range to feed lot, from the stockyards of Chicago to the butcher shops of the east. All this is an example of what Cronon calls the social construction of "second nature," that is, the elaborate remodeling of natural processes to meet the demands of an expanding national and world economy.

Nature's Metropolis sheds brilliant new light on many of the traditional themes of western history. Still, I must admit to some uneasiness about Cronon's apparent preference for unalloyed nature over "second nature." His discussion of the transformation of the western environment is permeated with a sense of deep regret. His Chicago is a mausoleum of destroyed landscapes: grain elevators stand like giant tombstones commemorating the tallgrass prairies, stacks of lumber are graveyards for the white pine forests, packing plants are monuments to the slaughtered bison herds. It is entirely appropriate, of course, to draw attention to the environmental degradation that accompanied western development. If such mournful looks backward are to be more than sentimental exercises, however, they must include an assessment of gains as well as losses. Plowing the tallgrass prairies, for instance, converted them into the bread basket of the North American continent; and the availability of abundant and relatively cheap grain on the world market was a principal cause of the rising standard of living for working people during the second half of the nineteenth century. This material achievement does not alter the fact of environmental destruction, but it certainly complicates moral and historical judgment. Nowhere does it appear in Cronon's discussion.

My uneasiness grows greater when I approach Worster. If Cronon's version of a new narrative for western history has some of the qualities of eulogy, Worster's preferred form is the jeremiad. His talk of modes of production and exploitation suggests the influence of Marxism, but it is a deracinated variety, lacking in social or political agency. Like the critical theorists associated with the Frankfurt school, whose work he cites frequently, Worster foresees little prospect of meaningful change arising from the existing configuration of political and social forces. For him, nature itself is the revolutionary subject, the only force that offers transforming hope. Discussing the buildup of salinity in western rivers, which is a consequence of intensive irrigation, Worster warns that "nature has a way of undermining the most entrenched elites in history, especially when they have overreached themselves." The western future, he believes, may include an ecological catastrophe that would "carry down with it the whole panoply of human instrumental control."

As White sharply observes, Worster writes environmental tragedies in which the only "satisfaction we gain is the knowledge of our limits." He, I mean Worster, aims to stir things up. If western history "wants to be vital and listened to," he argues, it "cannot be kept isolated from public controversy." It is hard not to applaud his engagement, and yet it is just as hard to let his gloom and doom go unchallenged. Contrast Worster's perspective, for example, with the views of Wallace Stegner, who argued in his influential 1987 essay "The American West as Living Space" that the West must learn to live within its limitations. Stegner's sense of those limitations is much more strenuous and nuanced.

The differences become evident in the ways the two handle the problem of "suitcase farmers," the westerners who commute between their rural acres and their residences in town. Worster argues that such a pattern encourages "an exploitative relationship with the earth." Stegner suggests that the suitcase farmer's adaptation is "as natural as the mobility of the buffalo," an example of how "as we have gone about modifying the western landscape, it has been at work modifying us." Differences like these are owed to fundamental assumptions. Worster condemns the ethical perspective that "has made man the measure of all things." I hear the warning about anthropocentrism issuing from the environmentalists, but I find myself in agreement with Stegner, who writes wisely that "I know no way to look at the world, settled or wild, except through my own human eyes. I know that it

The Mechanical Arm

How can we begin to bear what we don't have?
And then to feel, in empty space,
an arc of movement, far removed? Still its
barely stenciled hand points to a Palace

of Lost Things, where atomic glitter once erased
is reconstructed better than before
a moment got the best of what we had, replacing
it with absence. The century fills. Signac

wrote that though Seurat's father had lost an arm,
he used it nonetheless to carve a brace
of partridges, a roast, and two fowl. His pace
bordered on showmanship. Gleaming, the steel

and pulley arm sliced and cut above the ironed lace
as deft as, in a life removed, his own son's
swift untethered hand would disassemble what it saw,
then paint light's stilt-walk back in place.

CYNTHIA ZARIN

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wasn't created especially for my use, but I am the only instrument that I have access to by which I can enjoy the world and try to understand it."

"For this region that was once so lost in dreams and idealization," Worster writes, "we have been creating a new history, clear-eyed, demythologized, and critical." Such a comment captures the strong commitment among many western historians to a new history, but also the common perception of the necessity of a continuing struggle to overcome the lingering power of myth. Richard Slotkin's *Gunslinger Nation*, an impressive history of the frontier myth in modern America, helps to place this intellectual struggle in perspective. It completes a trilogy that Slotkin began with *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (1973) and continued in *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890* (1985). The earlier volumes examined the frontier as a theme in American literature and art, and this final one offers an extended analysis of western movies, which by 1910 had superseded dime novels and wild West shows as the primary vehicle for transmitting the frontier myth.

Following the recipe perfected by Cody, early silent westerns combined scenes and narratives drawn from western pulp fiction with authentic details of costume and scenery, creating a mythic storyscape that has remained essentially unchanged. The streets and storefronts of William H. Hart's *Hell's Hinges* (1916) could be the same western town featured in George Stevens's *Shane* (1953) or Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven*. Slotkin emphasizes the genre's ideological embrace of violence as "an essential and necessary part of the process through which American society was established and through which its democratic values are defended and enforced." Westerns typically conclude in a singular act of violence that, Slotkin argues, recapitulates America's violent frontier past and offers a justification for the use of righteous violence in the contemporary world. Metaphors of western violence—showdowns, hired guns, last stands—permeated American politics in the twentieth century just as they did language. "Would a Wyatt Earp stop at the 38th Parallel in Korea when the rustlers were escaping with his herd?" wrote a political commentator in the 1950s. "Would a Marshal Dillon refuse to allow his deputies to use shotguns for their own defense because of the terrible nature of the weapon itself? Ha!"

The originality of *Gunslinger Nation* lies less in what Slotkin says about particular Western films than in his insistence that they be understood in the context of cultural history. Consider the period of "classic" westerns that began in 1939, after a decade of hardly a "prestige" western, with the release of *Destry Rides Again*, *Dodge City*, *Drums Along the Mohawk*, *Jesse James*, *Stagecoach*, and *Union Pacific*. He argues that this revival—which included the flowering of regional western histories and folklore, the production of the WPA state guidebooks, and the increasing popularity of American historical novels—was part of a popular intellectual movement to reclaim American history from the spirit of disillusionment and debunking that began in the '20s and by the late '30s had pretty much demolished the central tenets of the Turner thesis.

The revivalist energy helped produce the golden age of major studio westerns that lasted for thirty years, a period that coincided with the cold war. "During this period," Slotkin writes, "there was a more or less continual exchange of symbols, themes, and concerns between the discourses of politics and movie production." His review of this traffic in ideas is punctuated by fascinating discussions of films like John Ford's *Rio Grande* (1950), in which the cavalry pursuit of Apaches across the border provides a commen-

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tary on the Korean War; John Sturges's *The Magnificent Seven* (1960), a Kennedy-era fantasy of Third World counterinsurgency; and Sam Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch* (1969), where that fantasy explodes in malignant violence.

The importance of the connection between the western and the politics of the cold war is best demonstrated by the precipitous fall of the genre amid the general cultural crisis attending the American disaster in Vietnam. This reaction, says Slotkin, amounted to a "rejection of the very idea that the frontier could provide the basis of a national public myth." He offers an illuminating history of Hollywood's growing preoccupation with Mexico as a metaphoric setting during the war. By sticking to strictly American productions, he misses here the opportunity to examine the phenomenon of "spaghetti" westerns, which during the 1960s exploited the widening gap between western image and reality, reversing many of the old stereotypes and letting the bad guys run riot. These and other "anti-Westerns"—films such as *Little Big Man*, *Buffalo Bill and the Indians*, *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*, and *Heaven's Gate* (not to mention *Blazing Saddles*)—lampooned the genre, subjecting the whole ideology of westering to devastating criticism, but without providing an alternative vision of the frontier experience.

Slotkin believes that this decline of the western corresponds with the beginning of what he calls a "liminal moment of our cultural history," a period during which intellectual energies are devoted primarily to the criticism and the demystification of old myths. But our national culture now needs a new synthesis of history and politics, argues Slotkin, one that will reinspire the image-making and storytelling capacity of popular culture. "We require a myth that can help us make sense of the history we have lived and the place we are living in." How heretical this sounds today, when a spirit of cynicism so dominates intellectual life. Slotkin maintains that historians and other intellectuals have a civic responsibility to be more than debunkers of myth and tellers of sad tales; they must be creators of an inspiring new sense of the past.

This challenge to intellectuals to attempt "productive revisions of myth" is indeed one that western historians should not ignore, given the important role that the history of the West has played in the "official ideology" of modern America. History is a critical discipline, and revisionist history the most critical of all. But in their ardor to over-

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throw the assumptions of their predecessors, revisionists often fail to recognize the importance of a new formulation of the past that accurately reflects the needs of the present. There will never be another Turner, that is, there will never be another theory of western history that so thoroughly captivates the public. But that does not mean that the history of the West can be of no use to contemporary America. The western past, even critically considered, offers historical themes and traditions that can speak eloquently to our troubled nation.

Consider, for example, the problem of social heterogeneity and social peace. Since the very beginning of the colonial era, relationships among diverse peoples have been critical in shaping the society of the West. This theme is one of the most prominent in White's book, running from the opening to the closing chapters. It is also a theme he explores in his brilliant history of the Old West, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (1991). The coming of the Europeans to the Indians' continent opened an era of violent conquest. Most important was the enormously destructive effect on the Indians of epidemic European diseases such as smallpox, measles, and other plagues. Native peoples died in numbers that numb the mind, their populations falling 50 percent to 90 percent in the century following first colonial contact. Historians now recognize this as the greatest demographic calamity in world history. From an estimated 7 million in 1500, the Indian population north of Mexico fell to about 250,000 before finally beginning to rebound in this century.

But successful colonization required also a process of mutual adaptation. In New Mexico, the site of the first European colony in the West, it took a century of struggle that included the violent Pueblo Revolt of 1680—the most successful Indian uprising in North American history—before Spanish colonists and Pueblo Indians learned that they needed each other, particularly as allies against mounted Apaches and Comanches. This story, telling of the painful achievement of cooperation, is more appropriate than the traditional western narrative of imperial glory, more relevant than the lament of indigenous victimization.

The historic compromise produced a multiethnic culture whose imprint continues to mark New Mexico as one of the most distinctive provinces of the continent. To be sure, New Mexico's history was unique, but in a general way the his-

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THOMAS H. ELIOT

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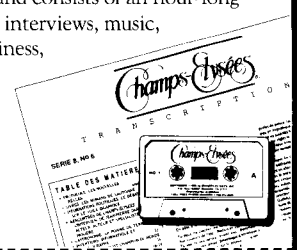

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tory of the American West before the mid-nineteenth century marked a slow and halting movement toward mutual accommodation between Europeans and Indians. From the villages of the Southwest to the towns of the Mississippi and Ohio valleys, from the outposts of the Hudson's Bay Company to the forts of the Russians on the Pacific, "it was impossible to find a social world in which Indians did not play intimate and essential roles," writes White. "Indians might be abused and oppressed, but Indians mattered."

It was no golden age of heroes, but the movement in the direction of what White calls "a common world" is filled with stories that speak directly to issues confronting us today, as colonization created societies jointly inhabited by Indians and settlers of varied ethnic backgrounds, as well as people of mixed ancestry, the offspring of this messy colonial process. The rediscovery of this common world is one of the foremost accomplishments of contemporary scholarship. Western historians have only begun to limn its contours, for in the nineteenth century it became a lost world, a casualty of the American sweep across the continent.

Traditional interpretations of western expansion made that movement seem "inevitable," but the new history reminds us that there was nothing smooth about it at all, that other ethnic arrangements first had to be dismantled. "We shall all be Americans," Thomas Jefferson had promised. A generation later, however, Andrew Jackson was asserting that Indians had "neither the intelligence, the industry, the moral habits, nor the desire of improvement" to live among American settlers. The official policy of Indian Removal, one of the essential features of the Jacksonian system of expansion, made it clear that there would be no common world under American rule. The migration of the fully acculturated Cherokees on the Trail of Tears resulted in the introduction of such "American" things as commercial agriculture, frame houses, schools, and newspapers into what would become Oklahoma, and displaced other Indians already living on the land. The history is rich with stories of diverse peoples who tried to find a place in the American West—Indians and Europeans, Mexicans, Asians, and African Americans—all sharing a common society in which a victory for one was often at the expense of another.

Yet diverse communities survive, including Indian and Hispanic places that date back hundreds of years, European immigrant enclaves, black towns, ranching and mining centers a century old. Like other regions of the country, the West has its share of well-planted communities, although historians have only begun to convey a deep awareness of the West as living space. Worster is certainly right when he writes of the West as "a place of rapid change, repeated dislocation, and surreal discontinuities." Still, amid this swirl there are places populated by those who moved in and adapted rather than move on—"the stickers," Stegner calls them.

Even Worster is left reflecting on those complicated realities. "Only a little of the history of those places has yet been told," he admits, in a remarkable sentence, "perhaps because historians like me have been too interested in dramatizing the messes we have made." We require histories that focus on *all* the people who worked to find alternatives to the mentality of bonanza, who struggled to make peace with the land and their neighbors. Worster concludes by proposing a history "with the struggle for adaptation as its main narrative, one that regards successful adaptation as a kind of heroism too." Such a history would be something grander and more ambitious than the current revisionism. It would be a genuinely new and tolerant western history that would inspire with tales of quiet triumphs rather than the noisy clamor of the wild West. •

Order and Early Sorrow

BY TIMOTHY FERRIS

Genius: The Life and Science of Richard Feynman by James Gleick

(Pantheon, 531 pp., $27.50)

"There are occurrences of such a delicate nature that one does well to cover them up with some rudeness to conceal them."
—Nietzsche

James Gleick's adept biography of the American physicist and folk hero Richard Feynman is seemingly about two people. Feynman the scientist was esteemed by his colleagues as a theorist of great originality and scope. This Feynman was the protean thinker who invented Feynman diagrams, a graphical method of depicting particle interactions now employed throughout high-energy physics. He developed the "path integral" approach to quantum mechanics, a method of handling quantum probabilities that has shed light on questions ranging from the microworld to the origin of the universe. He contributed to the elegant and accurate theory of quantum electrodynamics, a blending of special relativity and quantum mechanics applicable to nuclear physics, solid-state and plasma physics, laser technology, and many other fields. (It was for this work that he shared the Nobel Prize in physics in 1965 with Julian Schwinger and Sin-Itiro Tomonaga.) To be sure, Feynman was also much talked about as a colorful guy, witty, blunt, slangy, anti-pretentious, and charming in a rough-hewn way. But this side of his legend was generally viewed by scientists as secondary to his scientific work, as just one more example of the many eccentricities often found swarming in the nimbus of a genius.

For the wider public, however, the priorities were reversed. The Feynman of popular lore comes principally from two best-selling books, impishly titled *Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman* and *What Do You Care What Other People Think?* Cobbled together from interview tapes by his friend Ralph Leighton, these unweighty tomes present many of Feynman's funniest stories about himself, but are virtually devoid of scientific content. Reading them, one sees Feynman less as a deep and subtle thinker than as a scientific Huck Finn—a clever, unvarnished, wisecracking, and savagely honest boy genius, classically American and forever young, innocent of history and free as the wind.

Feynman the celebrity is a practical joker who cracked the safes at Los Alamos, taunting the generals by leaving witty notes in their top secret files; a whiz-kid playboy who hand-calculated the trajectory of an *Explorer II* satellite launch in 1958, determining that the rocket had crashed into the sea, then departed for a weekend in Las Vegas before NASA's most powerful computer arrived at the same conclusion; a bongo-beating *carioca* who turned up in *Paris Match* in 1952 cavorting at the carnival in Rio; and a womanizer who endlessly pursued chorus girls and beach bunnies and faculty wives,

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spent his Caltech lunch hours in a topless bar, and got his name in the papers when he signed a petition protesting its closure by the cops.

The trouble with all these colorful anecdotes is not that they are false, but that they are true. Confronted with the spectacle of a world-class intellectual working so energetically at making himself out to be the Hunter Thompson of physics, one may simply shrug and say, more power to him. That is pretty much the stance assumed by Leighton, who, in the preface to *Surely You're Joking* . . . , expresses delight in Feynman's extracurricular exploits: "That one person could invent so much innocent mischief in one life is surely an inspiration!" But for those who are inspired by the intellectual nobility of Feynman's work, it is possible, on reading the relentless japery of the Feynman-Leighton joke books, to become unaccountably tired and sick. Why, one wonders, did someone who could find such serene beauty in the natural world bother to act out the part of a perpetual teenager, interested mainly in sex, rebellion, and pranks?

This point, having no doubt flitted through the private gardens of many a commodious mind, was raised overtly, thirteen months after Feynman's death, by Murray Gell-Mann. A legendary polymath, Gell-Mann was often mentioned, not entirely in jest, as Feynman's leading competitor for the title of World's Smartest Man. The two stars of theoretical physics at Caltech presented a study in contrasts. Gell-Mann came off as a walking encyclopedia of Western culture, a superhuman know-it-all conversant with everything from matrix mathematics to the minutest details of obscure languages, medieval heraldry, bird songs, and the weaving of Caucasian carpets. Feynman talked in an imitation of a Brooklyn cab driver's street slang, described himself as "uncultured" and "anti-intellectual," and claimed to have read little of anything, not even physics. ("Disregard!" was his motto vis-à-vis the work of others.) Gell-Mann, proud and prickly, was out to impress. Feynman seemed not to care what anybody thought of him—and this, of course, impressed people even more.

So, in San Francisco in 1989, when Gell-Mann stepped to the lectern at a symposium in Feynman's memory, the audience listened with particular attention to what he had to say. Anyone who expected pure praise, an encomium composed in the spirit of Samuel Johnson's admonition that "in lapidary inscriptions a man is not upon oath," was disappointed. Gell-Mann paid tribute to

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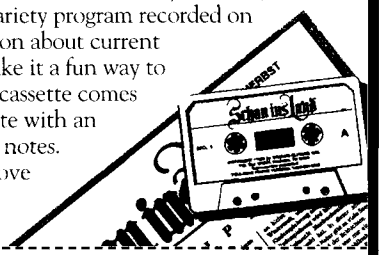

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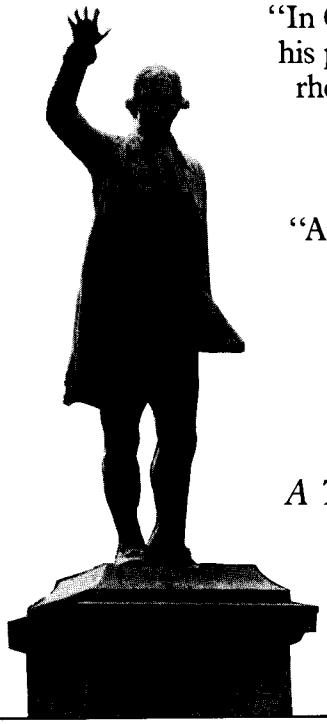

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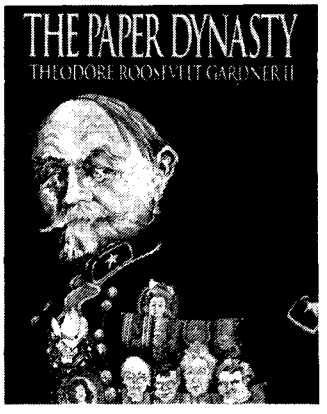

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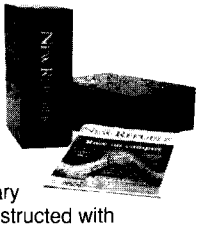

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Feynman's "powerful, ingenious, and original" ideas and his lack of pomposity, but then he proceeded to criticize what he called Feynman's "extraordinary efforts to be different—especially from his friends and colleagues." Feynman, he complained, "surrounded himself with a cloud of myth, and he spent a great deal of time and energy generating anecdotes about himself.... Turning things around and being difficult was a passion with Dick."

Gell-Mann's comments were characteristically tactless, but they were also characteristically acute. Many leading physicists have acquired myths as grand as those of Arthurian knights—Dirac the Taciturn, Einstein the Saintly, Heisenberg the Inscrutable—and few are innocent of having striven at least occasionally to buff their reputations to a high shine. (Gell-Mann the Unconquerable is an elbow-grease virtuoso in this regard.) Nor was Feynman the only physicist to have led an antic social life. At least two major theorists, the nuclear physicist George Gamow and the astrophysicist Yakov Borisovich Zeldovich, gave Feynman a run for his money in this regard. But the tales that Feynman told about himself are so heavy on comedy and so light on intellectualism as to raise the question of why he bothered living in such a way as to make them true. Why, if he really didn't care what other people thought, did he work so hard at making himself into a folk hero? It is around the dark sun of this question that any serious biography of Feynman is destined to orbit.

Born in Manhattan in 1918, Feynman grew up in Far Rockaway, Queens, luxuriating in that seaside community's windswept seashores and vaulted night skies. "Nature was elemental there, though for Feynman *elemental* did not mean simple or austere," writes Gleick, with the understated perspicacity that characterizes his book. Gleick ties these childhood experiences to remarks that Feynman would make decades later, during the famous two-year undergraduate course that overtaxed most of the Caltech students but produced the epochal three-volume *Feynman Lectures on Physics*: "Is the sand other than the rocks? That is, is the sand perhaps nothing but a great number of very tiny stones? Is the moon a great rock? If we understood rocks, would we also understand the sand and the moon?"

As a boy Feynman was a builder of cat's-whisker radios, a mixer of seething chemical compounds that went boom, a Math Club whiz, and a devourer of the encyclopedia. (His path seldom crossed with that of Schwinger, a contemporary New York prodigy, so quick that he was called "the Mozart of physics." But "long after," Gleick reports, "when they were old men, after they had shared a Nobel Prize for work done as rivals, they amazed a dinner party by competing to see who could most quickly recite from memory the alphabetical headings on the spines of their half-century-old edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica.") As a student, Feynman enchanted the strongest teachers, but he was the bane of the pedantry. Like Einstein, he could be told nothing, insisted on understanding everything on his own terms. Scrawled on his office blackboard on the day he died were the words, "What I cannot create, I do not understand."

At MIT and Princeton, he blazed a comet's path—erratic in detail but predeterminedly brilliant—and in 1943 he was summoned to Los Alamos to help build the bomb. There, granted a captive audience of some of the most capable physicists in the world, Feynman articulated the skeleton of his singular reputation as wonderful guy and mathematical phee-nom. The swell guy danced like an Arthur Murray instructor, flirted with every attractive female in sight, kept up a constant stream of gags. The phee-nom acted as a human computer, delivering instant answers to complex equations over the phone. Once he bet his companions at lunch that he could calculate, within sixty seconds and to better than 90 percent accuracy, any problem that could be stated in ten seconds. He solved the tenth binomial coefficient in the expansion of $(1+x)^{20}$, but ran out of time when confronted with the tangent of ten to the hundredth, which would have required his knowing the value of pi to 100 decimal places. If, as Gleick suggests, at least some of what Feynman did amounted to "conscious reputation-building," he was highly successful at it. Robert Oppenheimer praised him on both counts, calling him "by all odds the most brilliant young physicist here" and "a man of thoroughly engaging character and personality." The Hungarian-American physicist Eugene Wigner said of Feynman, "He is a second Dirac, only this time human."

A brief fallow period followed the war. Then Feynman had the flash of insight that led to his Nobel Prize research in quantum electrodynamics. (Seeing someone toss a dinner plate into the air in the Cornell student cafeteria, he treated himself to the "fun" of calculating the relationship between the plate's spin and its wobble. This led to a new comprehension of the quantum spin of the electron.) After that, for more productive years than any genius has a right

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to expect, his career was an exploding galaxy of illuminations. He did Nobel-class work on the weak and strong nuclear forces (responsible respectively for radioactive decay and for holding the nuclei of atoms together) and strode decades ahead of his time in his investigations of parallel processing, now recognized as the key to supercomputing.

A quick study—blessed, as he put it, with a poor memory—Feynman could learn a new subject, advance it, and forget most of what he knew about it before experts in the field saw him coming. In 1960, while amusing himself by conducting DNA experiments during a year's sabbatical from Caltech, he discovered the phenomenon of intragenic suppression, fundamental to understanding how the genetic code is read. "Without realizing it," Gleick writes, "Feynman had come to the brink of the next great breakthrough in modern genetics." With characteristic casualness, once his sabbatical was over he went back to physics without bothering to publish these results.

Feynman was an incandescent speaker, and—like Niels Bohr, John Wheeler, and just a few others—he was courageous enough to take an unsolved problem into a lecture hall and work at it while the audience looked on. I once saw him give a talk about the relationship of antimatter, particle spin, and Bose statistics. For an hour he thought out loud, groping for an answer. It eluded him that time, too. "I've given a lecture on this subject every five years, trying to figure it out, each time thinking that if I give this one more lecture, I'll figure it out," he explained. (He did figure it out, three years later, and presented it in 1986 in a lecture at Cambridge in honor of his hero, Paul Dirac.)

Like many another working physicist, Feynman was critical of philosophy; when his son Carl expressed an interest in becoming a philosopher, he was as shocked as if the young man had gone to work selling junk bonds. Yet he had a philosopher's gift for seeing general questions in specific problems. Gleick writes that "on the last page of his tiny olive-green dime-store address book, mostly for phone numbers of women (annotated *dancer beauty* or *call when her nose is not red*)," he jotted the lines:

> Principles
> You can't say A is made of B
> or vice versa.
> All mass is interaction.

Elsewhere in his notebooks he remarked upon the "great value of a satisfactory philosophy of ignorance ... teach how doubt is not to be feared but welcomed." Science, he wrote,

> is a way to teach how something gets to be known, what is now known, to what extent things *are* known (for nothing is known absolutely), how to handle doubt and uncertainty, what the rules of evidence are, how to think about things so that judgments can be made, how to distinguish truth from fraud, and from show.

His very presence was a stimulant to learning. I recall his saying, to a graduate student who asked a visiting lecturer what his "prejudice" was concerning the nature of dark matter in the universe, "What do you care about his prejudices? You're here to develop your own prejudices!" Still, few students learned by trying to imitate Feynman's methods. He was too original a thinker for that. The mathematician Mark Kac, who knew Feynman at Cornell, observed:

> There are two kinds of geniuses, the "ordinary" and the "magicians." An ordinary genius is a fellow that you and I would be just as good as, if we were only many times better. There is no mystery as to how his mind works.... It is different with the magicians.... The working of their minds is for all intents and purposes incomprehensible. Even after we understand what they have done, the process by which they have done it is completely dark. They seldom, if ever, have students because they cannot be emulated and it must be terribly frustrating for a brilliant young mind to cope with the mysterious ways in which the magician's mind works. Richard Feynman is a magician of the highest caliber.

Yet who, "really," was he? Gleick has the good sense not to attempt a conclusive answer to such a question, but after reading his biography and reflecting broadly on Feynman's life, I am inclined to hazard two observations. First, that he was all of a piece. The physicist Freeman Dyson, upon meeting Feynman at Cornell, described him in a letter home as "half genius and half buffoon." When he got to know Feynman better, however, he modified this opinion. "A truer description," he wrote, "would have said that Feynman was all genius and all buffoon. The deep thinking and the joyful clowning were not separate parts of a split personality." There was but one Feynman, and if he took refuge behind a mask, he had the integrity to make the mask a part of himself. That, I suspect, is why he worked at living up to his clownish persona. He had the honesty to be what he wanted to appear to be.

But why wear a mask at all? For the usual reason: pain. The foundations of Feynman's discomfiture were laid in the customary way, that is, in his youth, when the slide-rule-carrying, physically uncoordinated, plastic-pocket-liner-wearing nerd was stung by more than his

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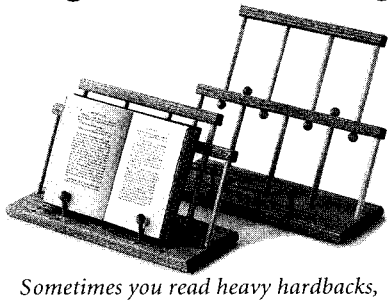

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share of societal brickbats. (The phrase "Surely you're joking, Mr. Feynman" came from the humiliation that he suffered when, as a graduate student at a Princeton soiree, he asked for both lemon and milk in his tea.) He reacted by trying to be rough and ready, a regular guy. He learned how to dance, made a pathetic study of how to "pick up girls" in bars, and otherwise acted out a callow youth's notion of male normalcy. "The reason why I say I'm 'uncultured' or 'anti-intellectual' probably goes all the way back to the time when I was in high school," he once recalled. "I was always worried about being a sissy; I didn't want to be too delicate." His role models were not sophisticates like Oppenheimer and Heisenberg, but experimenters and engineers: "the guy who worked in the machine shop and could make things." Closed to him, he believed, were the paths of the effete, the aesthete, or anyone else so sensitive as to suffer.

As it was, however, he would suffer quite enough. When he married his high school sweetheart, the beautiful Arline Greenbaum, in 1942, she was already ill with tuberculosis. Doctors cautioned the couple that, owing to the communicability of the disease, they must not make love. She died in 1945. Two years later, soon after his father's death, Feynman wrote his dead wife a letter:

> D'Arline,
> I adore you, sweetheart.... When you were sick you worried because you could not give me something that you wanted to & thought I needed. You needn't have worried. Just as I told you then there was no real need because I loved you in so many ways so much. And now it is clearly even more true—you can give me nothing now yet I love you so that you stand in my way of loving anyone else.... I know you will assure me that I am foolish & that you want me to have full happiness & don't want to be in my way. I'll bet you are surprised that I don't even have a girlfriend (except you, sweetheart) after two years. But you can't help it, darling, nor can I—I don't understand it, for I have met many girls & very nice ones and I don't want to remain alone—but in two or three meetings they all seem ashes. You only are left to me.... P.S. Please forgive my not mailing this—but I don't know your new address.

Here was pain and devotion that even his carefree legend could not erase. "That he had written such a letter to the woman he loved, two years after her death, could never become part of the iconography of Feynman, the collection of stories and images that was already beginning to follow him about," Gleick writes. Feynman married twice more, raised a family, became an international celebrity, never lost the energy and the spontaneity that made those around him glad for the gift of his companionship. (When he was dying of cancer, he asked his physician what his chances were and was told, "It's impossible to talk about the probability of a single event." "From one professor to another," he replied, "it is possible if it's a future event.") But the mask stayed in place. As Gleick writes:

> The Feynman who could be racked by strong emotion, the man stung by shyness, insecurity, anger, worry, or grief—no one got close enough anymore to see him. His friends heard a certain kind of story instead, in which Feynman was an inadvertent boy hero, mastering a bureaucracy or a person or a situation by virtue of his naïveté, his good humor, his brashness, his commonsense cleverness (not brilliance), and his emperor's-new-clothes honesty.

Both the mask and the man were genuine. Indeed, they depended on each other. The mask gave Feynman room to shine, to stay bright though he walked in the shadow of death. As Wilde remarked, "Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask and he will tell you the truth." Feynman spoke the truth, and he sought it everywhere. "Nothing is mere," he said. When he died, stoics who could jeer at the prospect of their own deaths collapsed and wept. Gleick's thorough, balanced, lucid, and fascinating biography does Feynman justice, and in doing so it charts something of the void that was left behind.

TIMOTHY FERRIS is the author of *The Mind's Sky: Human Intelligence in a Cosmic Context* (Bantam), *Coming of Age in the Milky Way* (Doubleday), and other books on astronomy and physics.

From the House of the Living

BY JOHN SIMON

Janáček's Operas: A Documentary Account by John Tyrrell

(Princeton University Press, 405 pp., $35)

The year 2000 approaches and with it the time for retrospects and summings up. Of no small interest will be the assessment of opera in the twentieth century. It has been argued that opera is a dead form, that this was the century that witnessed its irreversible decline. If this is so, opera composers might as well stow their staves, make paper hats of their manuscripts, or switch to writing movie music, musical comedies, or pop songs. Yet what if it could be shown that opera in our century scaled some of its greatest heights, that if only musical education and programming in our opera houses were not hopelessly lagging behind modern achievements, opera could hold its head high and march proudly into the twenty-first century?

There seems to be no way as yet to get beyond unadventuresome programmers and audiences. Let the Metropolitan Opera undertake something even slightly out of the ordinary, *Lulu* or *Billy Budd*, and already tickets are easier to obtain, and after an intermission or two you could sneak the entire student body of Juilliard into the empty seats. Of course, if a new opera gets the hype (not to mention the fancy production values) accorded to *The Ghosts of Versailles*, you can sell out several performances. But what happens the following season, when the work is no longer cocktail party chitchat?

I have no solution to the problem, except to assert that there are twentieth-century operas that could give pleasure and sustain public interest in a way that trendy stuff such as *Nixon in China*, *X*, or *Einstein on the Beach* cannot. And this is where a composer such as Leoš Janáček comes in. Out of his nine operas, six or seven should be performed regularly, and they, along with operas by Barber, Bartók, Berg, Blomdahl, Britten, Debussy, Falla, Henze, Hindemith, Martin, Martinů, Poulenc, Prokofiev, Ravel, Respighi, Sallinen, Schoeck, Shostakovich, Strauss, Stravinsky, Szymanowski, Walton, Weill, and several others, could lead us gradually to a full awareness and acceptance of the achievements of our century, and so build a bridge into the future.

Janáček could be the crucial bridgehead. For his operas have three consistent characteristics that ought to speak to all: the use of folk melody, simulated rather than actual, but still folk-inspired; the adoption and the adaptation of

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speech melodies and rhythms; and the application of psychology, which Janáček studied in various forms, to music. We are all, however urbanized, descended from "folk," and tapping into folk music reawakens tribal memories of rituals, secular feasts, martial marches, and such. We all speak, and the composer who can in some non-slavish manner approximate in song the way we talk to one another will hook into and extend our sense of language. And if he also understands the psyche and can convey its fluctuations in music—the music that our emotions would make if they made music—he should have it made.

And here John Tyrrell's magnificent new book comes in. It does not tell us all that much about the operas themselves; Tyrrell, one of the world's foremost Janáček scholars, has done that elsewhere. But it does fill us in sovereignly on how hard it is to write a fine but new and different-sounding opera; and how much harder yet it is to get it performed, intelligently reviewed, and understood; and how much chance, coincidence, and luck have to do with all this.

Tyrrell learned Czech and proceeded to a quarter century's work (so far) at the Janáček archive in Brno, the Moravian capital, where all sorts of published and unpublished material awaited an able and informed mind to translate it for English-speaking readers. He has, of course, gone elsewhere, too, in his quest to bring together whatever sheds light on the slow, arduous, incomprehension- and envy-crossed gestation and genesis of Janáček's operas, of which five are unquestionable masterpieces, two considerable achievements, and two negligible. Few composers in any century—only Richard Strauss, perhaps, in ours—can boast as good a record.

What is particularly valuable about Tyrrell's book is that it manages, by the careful sifting and weighing of the material, by the inclusion of things that at first glance do not seem totally related, by the excellent connective and explanatory passages inserted wherever necessary, and by the good luck that the operas are central to Janáček's oeuvre, to communicate much more than its somewhat dry, even academic-sounding title would suggest. Though it is undeniable that the collateral reading of a good critical biography or more general study can enhance one's enjoyment of *Janáček's Operas*, Tyrrell's book speaks amply and accessibly for itself, so that anyone even slightly aware of who and what Janáček was should not feel left out.

Left out, however, is precisely what Janáček himself often felt as a Moravian rather than a Bohemian composer. For

LEOŠ JANÁČEK BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

even before the country became Czechoslovakia at the end of World War I, Bohemia and its capital, Prague, lorded it over Moravia and Slovakia culturally and politically. Brno, the Moravian capital, where Janáček spent most of his life, had to resign itself to a second-class, almost provincial, position. Even the speech of Moravia, with its short a's where Bohemian would put long ones, passed for a mere dialect in Prague. Touchingly, as Tyrrell relates, the composer would answer the phone, "Janáček—with a long 'a'" in an attempt to upgrade his status. Except that, not having a phone in his home, he wasn't able to indulge in this bit of upward mobility very often.

A language can be either quantitative or qualitative, that is, accentual. French is the former, with the variations stemming from long and short syllables. English, by contrast, is qualitative, with the accented and unaccented syllables providing the variety. Czech is both: the language has a weak but fixed stress on the first syllable of every word, but then length of syllable becomes an important factor. Thus with "Janáček" you accentuate the first syllable but draw out the second, and the double music of Czech becomes manifest. It makes for a curious plangency, as if an initial sob were followed by a low moan. Other Slavs, with harsher speech melodies, look down on Czech as "a wimpy language," but it lends itself, when set to music, to fascinating, and slightly querulous or lachrymose-sounding, tone sequences.

Janáček was, of all the world's composers, the most obsessed with the spoken language. Although he, like many other composers everywhere, collected folk songs, his interest in speech melody, *napěvek*, was even greater. Wherever he went, he took down the *napěveky* he heard around him, and not only from people: the sounds that animals and objects made were no less stuff for his little notebooks, wherein the somewhat spindly notes would spider across staves that he drew himself. That way, he felt, ready-made pages of blank note paper would not lure him into prolixity. But some of this surely had to do with his early poverty, and the many years of music teaching, organ playing, and choirmastering he had to do before relative affluence allowed him to do full-time composing.

He was born in the tiny village of Hukvaldy, population circa 570, on July 3, 1854. The tenth of the village schoolmaster's fourteen children, five of whom died in infancy, "Leoš lived," to quote his biographer Jaroslav Vogel, "in close contact with music, nature, and poverty." As concerns the first, his father was a music lover, part-time choirmaster, and dedi-

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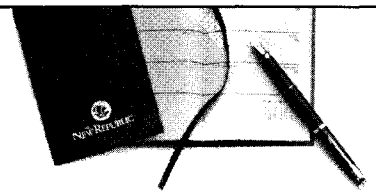

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cated beekeeper, who sometimes supplemented his meager salary as a fiddler at dances. As for nature, Hukvaldy is situated at the foot of "an imposing, thickly wooded hill on top of which ... are the dusty remains of Hukvaldy castle," this being a region "of undulating hills and woodlands." (I quote from Ian Horsbrugh's *Leoš Janáček*.) These woodlands that introduced Leoš to his future heroine Vixen Sharpears were also to become, some seven decades later, the indirect cause of his death.

Poverty could not stop the gifted young man from studying music in Leipzig and Vienna, two of the best places for solid, conservative training. He emerged sounding like a Slavonic Brahms—perhaps another Smetana, for whom Janáček was never to have much use, or a Dvořák, whose admiring friend he was to become. Few indeed are the major composers whose early works are as uncharacteristic and unexciting as Janáček's. The three most popular pieces from his early period are the *Suite for String Orchestra* (1877), the *Lachian Dances* (1889-90), and the especially Germanic-sounding *Idyll for String Orchestra* (1878), to which I listen in vain for signs of what was to come. Somewhere around the turn of the century, however, Janáček found his own voice and began composing increasingly idiosyncratic works in all genres, works with the uncanny ability to imprint themselves on the ear and the memory.

Masterpieces did not start coming regularly, however, until 1916 or so—with one major exception, *Jenůfa*, his third opera, written fitfully (he had little time for composing) between 1894 and 1903. In its unrevised form, it premiered in Brno in 1904, where the tiny Moravian theater (as opposed to the big Austrian one) had twenty-nine musicians—no harp, bass clarinet, or English horn—who soon dwindled to eighteen. For years Janáček struggled to get the opera properly mounted in Prague, but there the conductor and artistic director was Karel Kovařovic, one of whose operas Janáček had, years before, panned. (As critic, essayist, librettist, and epistolarist, Janáček proved himself to be a considerable artist in words as well.) There is no memory like that of a stung reviewee, and it took Janáček's campaigning, the efforts of his influential friends, and the suasion of his sublime music some thirteen years to break down Kovařovic's resistance, and even then the work was performed slightly adulterated by the conductor's tinkering with the orchestration.

Still, with the premiere of *Jenůfa* in Prague in 1916, Janáček's importance and popularity were established in the East; and the West came around when the opera took Vienna by storm in 1918. The path to this recognition, however, was worse than merely slow and laborious. It was painful, even heartrending. Tyrrell's second-longest chapter, on *Jenůfa*, reads like one of the most unsettling dramas in the history of music. The strokes of bad luck, the disheartening setbacks, the appalling misunderstandings multiply and leave the reader, whether a music lover or just a compassionate human being, gasping for breath.

The operas before *Jenůfa*, *Šarka* and *The Beginning of a Romance*, are nugatory, partly because Janáček had not yet found his style, partly because of poor librettos, and partly because the composer, profoundly drawn by the *ewig Weibliche*, lacked a feminine influence, a muse to spur him on. Although Janáček married for love, and his wife, Zdenka, had to defy her well-established bourgeois parents to marry "down," the conjugal happiness was short-lived. It is often averred that what killed it was the death of both Janáček children, the greatly gifted Vladimír before the age of 3 and the charming Olga at not quite 21.

But there were clearly other difficulties, some of which can be inferred from Tyrrell's book. Tyrrell is the first anywhere to print some of Janáček's letters to Zdenka. From Prague, where he is overseeing the rehearsals of *Jenůfa*, Leoš reports about a tea party: "We thought of you kindly; after all, I know that now perhaps you also believe in my musical calling." How sad, this wife who doubts her husband's vocation and genius! It would have been particularly saddening for a man who had had to put up such a herculean fight for recognition, and whose own almost superhuman faith in himself never wavered.

Jenůfa, with Gabriela Preissová's libretto from *Her Stepdaughter*, her own play based on observations of village life, was composed largely under the influence of the beloved daughter Olga, who was slowly dying from the aftereffects of typhoid fever. "The sicker Oluška became," wrote the faithful housekeeper Marie Stejskalová in her reminiscences, which were published in 1959, "the more obsessed she became with her father's new opera. And sensitive as he was, he put his pain over Oluška into his work, the suffering of his daughter into Jenůfa's suffering." Olga asked, "Daddy, play me *Jenůfa*. I will never hear your opera in the theater." In his autobiography (1924), Janáček wrote, "I would bind *Jenůfa* with the long illness, suffering, and laments of my daughter Olga and my little boy Vladimír." On the score itself, the

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father wrote, "To you, Olga, in memory."

As he composed, Janáček even jotted down in musical notation Olga's sighs. And, sure enough, as one listens to the opera—which concerns, among other things, the killing of an illegitimate baby—one feels an unutterable melancholy lurking behind even the ultimate coming together of the tormented lovers. Other operas may contain as much of the bitter and the sweet as *Jenůfa*, but for the unique, recurring blend of perfect bittersweetness, it has, in my view, no equal.

Women, I repeat, were of supreme significance to Janáček. And so his operas, for the most part, have female protagonists, *Jenůfa* and *Kát'a Kabanová* featuring even a second female character of roughly equal importance. And if *Fate* (1903-04) does not have a clear-cut feminine protagonist, it was nevertheless triggered by Janáček's infatuation with Mrs. Kamila Urválková, the first of his two Kamilas, whom he met at his favorite spa, Luhačovice, in 1903. As he was to write in his autobiography, "She was one of the most beautiful of women. Her voice was like that of a viola d'amore." And, as Tyrrell remarks, "thereafter [he] smuggled this archaic instrument into his scores as an erotic symbol."

Fate could have been a magnificent opera but for its truly deplorable libretto. Yet such was the austere composer's underlying sentimentality that he chose as his librettist a totally inexperienced young schoolteacher, Fedora Bartošová, to dramatize and to versify the scenario that he had laid out, even though she had published only a few poems in magazines. But she had been Olga's closest friend! Still, if Bartošová made a mess of things, Janáček did even more so. Boldly he had declared that he was looking for a modern libretto, "natural, completely true to life": the story was to be "completely realistic, drawn from life at spa." It was a conflation of an early disappointing affair that Kamila had with another composer, and of his own, almost certainly platonic, dalliance with her, which nevertheless aroused her husband's jealousy. But Janáček, feeling he had to disguise the facts, replaced the jealous husband with a demented, meddling mother, and ended up with a grotesquerie instead of a tragedy.

Yet the modern story, the everyday characters, and the quasi-autobiographical plot place *Fate* in the forefront of a new trend in opera: *verismo*, pioneered by Mascagni, Leoncavallo, Charpentier, and later Puccini, all of whom Janáček admired. In these operas, prose predominates and, in Janáček especially, most of the melody is carried by the orchestra. People seldom sing together; usually they take turns, as in normal conversation. Such innovation becomes even more pointed in *The Excursions of Mr. Brouček*, on which the composer worked for nine-and-a-half years (1908-17), much of the time chasing after potential librettists or hectoring actual ones. If agonizing over *Jenůfa* was the near-tragedy of Janáček's career, the travails surrounding *Brouček* were its supreme farce.

Nine librettists worked on this opera off and on, and a good many others had been solicited by the composer in vain. Based on a fiction by the poet Svatopluk Čech, it tells of two drunken dreams of Brouček, a petit-bourgeois Prague landlord and beer guzzler, transported first to the moon, then into the fifteenth century. On the moon, he gets involved with esoteric poets and ethereal lunar maidens; in history, he gets swept up in the Hussite wars, proves a coward and liar, and is put to death by burning alive inside a barrel. Back in reality at his beloved tavern, he continues to be a braggart and a poltroon. This was meant as a showing up of the slackness and the smugness of the Czech middle class, but the moon creatures were themselves lampoons of Čech's rival poets, so that by contrast Brouček comes off rather too well until late in the opera, and the satire lacks focus. Yet if the libretto may be a ragged patchwork, the music is often magnificent, transfiguring the burlesque and persiflage of the text. So driven was Janáček in creating the work that when the Austrian political police jailed one of his main librettists, the composer expected the poet to continue writing in his cell "as though absolutely nothing had happened."

The next opera, *Kát'a Kabanová* (1919-21), based on Ostrovsky's play *The Storm*, is the first of three masterpieces that could be called the Kamila Trilogy. At Luhačovice, once again, Janáček met a beautiful young woman taking the cure. Kamila Stösslavá, like Kamila Urválková before her, was married, and once again the composer's love remained unrequited. But in 1917, he being 63 and the muse only 25, the composer was content to bask in his one-sided passion. Vogel quotes one of Janáček's letters to Kamila: "Between you and me there is only a world of beauty and all is nothing but fantasy. But this world of fantasy is as necessary to my life as air and water." Thus inspired, Leoš poured out his final, finest masterworks.

The three events that set off this miraculous last phase, then, were the Prague success of *Jenůfa* in 1916, the meeting

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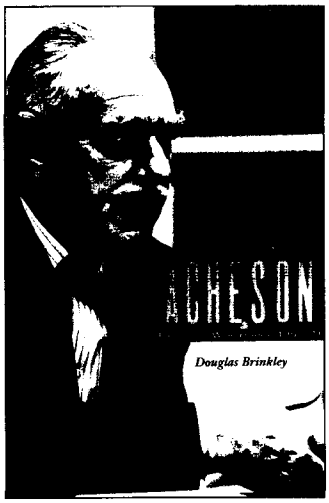

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with Kamila in 1917, and the elation over the forming of an independent Czechoslovak republic in 1918. There emerged such gems as *Taras Bulba*, *The Diary of One Who Vanished*, the Glagolitic Mass, the concertino and capriccio for piano, the wind sextet *Youth*, the two string quartets, and the late operas, to name only the most remarkable.

What hasn't been clearly formulated yet is the exact relation of the three operatic masterpieces to Kamila and to one another. In *Kát'a Kabanová*, the exquisite heroine is the victim of a husband and a lover neither of whom is worthy of her, and she ends up a suicide. This is, in effect, the Kamila who could have found true love, Janáček seems to be saying, if she could only have recognized what he had to offer. In *The Cunning Little Vixen* (1923-24), the heroine, Sharpears, a wily, sexy creature of the wild, is way out of the amiable Forester's reach. He, poor fellow, is only a man, who must put up with his by now dreary wife, and yearn for the untamed vixen, as he and several other men do for the gypsy Terynka. But Sharpears mates with, and has cubs by, the fox Goldenstripe, one of her own kind. When she is shot by the poacher Harašta (to become a muff for Terynka), she leaves behind little vixens equally splendid, and equally beyond the Forester's possessing. The aging Forester must accept his role as the observer, and find his fulfillment in the forest, in nature. The Kamila-Leoš parallel is clear enough, as is the lesson the composer encapsulated in music of supreme yearning and stunningly concentrated final resignation.

In *The Makropulos Case* (1923-25), Kamila is the opera-singer heroine whom an elixir of youth has kept young and beautiful for 300 years. All men desire her, some actually die for her, but she has become jaded: bored with lust, love, and even, as she discovers, life. Not that Kamila ever reached such a stage, but Janáček here tries to convince himself that this icy woman offers no satisfaction to lovers or, indeed, to herself, so that a would-be lover is wise to abstain. Leoš must leave Kamila's body to her husband, and make do with the idea of her. The opera is an inspired abdication, a passionate farewell.

Accordingly, the next and last opera, *From the House of the Dead* (1927-28), contains only one tiny feminine role; all the rest are men. Yet Kamila sneaks even into this opera, with its libretto that Janáček based on Dostoyevsky's barely fictionalized account of his term in a Siberian prison camp. Both the tenderhearted Tatar youth Aljeja (sung by a woman) and Akulka, the girl in a story told by one of the inmates, are redolent of Kamila. But in this work the emphasis is on the terrible loneliness of men in prison, and on "the spark of God" to be found even in the minds of criminals.

Tyrrell quotes from a letter to Kamila in Janáček's characteristic style of free-verse-like line breaks: "What about us! We also put out the lights, / we also do not cry out to make the house shake and bring it down, / we also talk to one another in intimate voices." ("Intimate voices" suggests the title of the second string quartet, "Intimate Letters," Janáček's ultimate effusion of love for Kamila.) At the last, the composer reveals himself as the supreme romantic—but the opera's music is not romantic or even neoromantic, but something else, purely Janáček's own. It is too bad that death prevented the customary finishing touches on this score, which Janáček wrote much faster than was his wont: in eleven months at age 74. "Something drove him on," Tyrrell observes, and he quotes Leoš to Kamila, "as if I had to settle my accounts with life."

And indeed, Kamila the muse was to prove also Janáček's angel of death. How ecstatic the 74-year-old Janáček was when the beloved, her husband, and her young son came for a vacation at the summer house that the composer had acquired in his native Hukvaldy. The husband soon discreetly departed, but on August 6 the boy got lost during a family hike in the woodlands. Janáček tirelessly led the search, and caught a chill. (The boy later safely returned on his own.) Out of chivalry toward Kamila, Leoš tried to conceal his cold; pneumonia with complications set in, and he died in the hospital on August 12, 1928. To the nurse who asked him if he wanted to make his peace with God, he replied, "Nurse, you probably don't know who I am."

From the House of the Dead accomplishes the wonder of being both gloomy and uplifting, its melodies sparse and hectic, but also soaring. Like its imprisoned characters, the opera manages to squeeze beauty out of hopelessness, and is, to me, right up there with those other twentieth-century masterpieces of darkness made visible, despair made song: Debussy's *Pelléas*, Bartók's *Bluebeard*, Berg's *Wozzeck*.

The other day a wretched regular on WQXR's "First Hearing" program, after listening to a superb new recording on the Chandos label of Janáček's tone poem *The Fiddler's Child*, pronounced Janáček a "nice minor composer." Minor is precisely what Janáček is not. Far more original and daring than any other Czechoslovak composer, he was modern in a way that is still being (unsuccessfully) imitated by minimalists such as Glass. Tyrrell quotes the director and musicologist Ota Zítek, who produced some of Janáček's operas in Brno, in a revealing statement from his unpublished memoirs. About the rehearsals of *Vixen*, Zítek remarks, "Tunes were not to be developed; [Janáček] wanted those short, aphoristic little motifs to coincide with the aphoristic movements of people." A brilliant statement: human activity perceived as broken down into "aphorisms," short, snappy gestures that Janáček's music captures in their concision, seeming changeability and inconsistency, but with the ultimate pattern emerging as a vast mosaic of profound, unchanging emotions.

It is important to try to convey— in, as nearly as possible, non-technical terms— what Janáček's music does. Some dozen years ago I offered this description:

> There is a characteristic binary rhythm in these compositions. In its basic form, this is a musical argument between A, who is dreamy, contemplative, melancholy, yearning, and sometimes disconsolate, and B, who is cheerful, sassy, ironic—at times even brash, pugnacious, furibund. Back and forth goes the debate between them, the two points of view becoming more and more nervously and intricately intertwined, until we realize that A and B are two aspects of the composer's personality. One device for bringing the two into closer contact is the shortness of their utterances—a kind of musical stichomythia.... And then there is the sneaking in of slightly contradictory underpainting: the jauntily kinetic sequences come to sudden pauses or wistful rallentandos; behind the meditative or longing passages may sound, say, a piano ostinato that is the soul of matter-of-factness, of musical common sense. A dialogue, then, for self-contradictory voices— a musical picture of our own riven selves.

This, of course, refers mainly to the non-vocal music, but it is applicable to the operas as well. Here the A and the B are, respectively, the singers and the orchestra in a quaint symbiosis. The orchestra may start out on some melodious course of its own, from which the voices will take off, but in quite a different direction: more discursive and argumentative, wry or even brutal. Often a very high tessitura in the instrumentation will contrast with low-register singing, or vice versa. Jaroslav Vogel speaks of Janáček's predilection for the extremes of pitch, the "liking for chord notes at the extreme ends of the compass while leaving out the center"; you might almost call it manic-depressive music, but brought within aesthetic, indeed ethical, control.

Enjoyable, furthermore, in a somewhat special sense. You are made to enter into a game of tag with the music:

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to follow its leaps and sudden twists, its slipping out of the predictable, where you think it is going, and popping up where you least expect it. It teases and spurts, frolics and suddenly spits at you like an angry feline. Next moment, it cajoles, insinuates itself into your feelings, and, ever so innocently, wrings your heart. Much of it is based on repetition, on the hypnotic effect of reiterating a phrase with passionate insistence, but always with some significant variation in pitch or orchestration; then, just as suddenly, bowling you over with something antithetical, antipodal even.

Janáček was not afraid of using unusual instruments (even chains and other work tools in *From the House of the Dead*), switching rapidly from one dynamic extreme to the other, or stopping for a suspenseful pause. From angularity to curvaceousness and back again he goes in a trice. And this with such concision, such condensation, that you cannot take anything for granted, let alone become satiated. The most beautifully melodic passages are generally the briefest. He knows the effectiveness of leaving us a trifle hungry, wishing that final love music in *Jenůfa* to go on just a bit longer, please, or that the great acceptance-of-the-world-as-it-is music at the conclusion of *Vixen* would not stop there. Elina Makropulos's farewell to life is made even more poignant by its succinctness, and the few cheerful moments in *From the House of the Dead* are exactly enough to instill a spark of hope in the characters and the audience.

What Janáček created in his later operas—"a kind of parlando for the singers, accompanied by gentle nudges from the orchestra," as Horsbrugh puts it—is, in essence, the path that modern opera has taken. It is also, in Vogel's words, "the impression of a continuous flow, having ... neither beginning nor end ... a sort of 'endless melody.'" Whether the Moravian speech melodies strike you as recognizably speech-derived, I'm not sure, but there is a sense of the music grabbing you by the collar and pouring out confidences to you, hesitantly or explosively—sometimes compulsively repeating something vital, yet finding terseness even in repetition.

Tyrrell quotes a particularly purblind reviewer who declared that "*Kát'a Kabanová* cannot stand as a model. It would be a mistake were it to become a school. Czech opera has only one way forward: Smetana." Whatever Smetana may or may not have done for Czech opera, for world opera it was Janáček who showed the way forward.

JOHN SIMON is drama critic for *New York* magazine and film critic for *National Review*.

TRB *continued from page 6*

In Europe they do things differently. There, most newspapers are overtly ideological, and you take that into account in choosing a paper and in how you read it. There's much to be said for this system. Opinion journalism, if it's honest, can sometimes be a more efficient way of acquiring information than an American-style objective news story (in my opinion). Intelligent judgment is less paralyzed by the need for "balance," and less space is wasted on quotations from others saying things the writer dares not say herself. There are subjects on which I'd rather read a *Wall Street Journal* editorial, undoubtedly "biased" though it may be, than a *Wall Street Journal* news article.

But in this country we cling to the belief that the news, unlike editorials, should be "balanced." Thus two other silly studies, released recently, purporting to compute whether television reports and/or newspaper stories during the election campaign were pro- or anti- one candidate or another. One study, from the Joan Shorenstein Barone Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government (an organization whose very name takes up half of any news story dedicated to reporting its findings), actually measured hundreds of news stories on a scale of one (very positive) to five (very negative).

The study, which covered February through May, found that Bush's average score was 3.3—a full 0.9 more negative than Clinton's 2.4. The implicit premise of this pseudo-scientific exercise seems to be that in a perfect world every candidate would score an exact 2.5. But at a time when Bush was presiding over a stagnant economy, running an inept campaign, and being bashed from inside and outside his own party, a perfectly "balanced" press coverage would itself be evidence of bias.

The press brings these studies on itself. Not by displaying bias, but by its hunger for respectability and professionalization. That's what leads to the creation of things like the Freedom Forum and the Barone Blah Blah Blah, which then need to keep themselves busy by commissioning studies and heartaching over the meaning of it all. The expanding supply of solutions creates an increasing demand for problems.

Then, too, journalists have a psychological disposition—related, perhaps, to the psychological disposition that leads them to be disproportionately liberal—toward public wallowing in self-doubt and self-flagellation. Conservative press critics suffer no such malady. Or at least so far as I've noticed.

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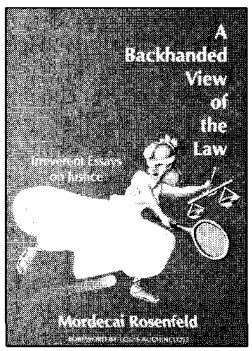

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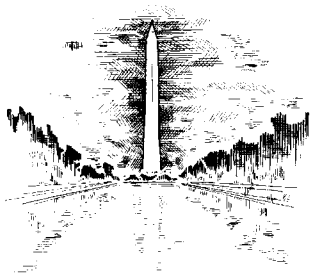
Losing ground

FOR SOME CONSERVATIVES WHO were not out of high school when conservatism came to power, this is a curiously becalming moment. Twelve years of Republican government have just decisively ended and the British Tories are in a doldrums of terminal improvisation. There's talk once again of economic summits and industrial policy, the proliferation of rights and the supremacy of politics. Earnest young liberals who have long been seen reading the *Washington Monthly* on the No. 42 bus downtown each morning now appear to have an unnerving glint in their eyes. For those of us who know of Carter and Callaghan as distant grotesque memories, it should surely come as a bit of a shock: our first encounter with political failure, a moment for angst (and a little rest) rather than complacency.

BUT THE REST I HAVE IN MIND IS not simply an expression of political exhaustion. It is enabled by the reassuring fact that Americans have just elected one of the least ideological—and therefore one of the most authentically conservative—presidents in memory. To be sure, in some respects Clinton is simply a much, much better Bush: his instincts are profoundly cautious, his politics likely to be governed by a shallow "pragmatism" punctuated by spasms of ideological pandering to interest groups in his own party. But Clinton is likely to be better at this game than his predecessor; he's a good deal more charming and has far more skill at talking—and lying—his way out of trouble. And unlike Bush, Clinton will not be seen as the inheritor of an ideological crusade that he neither believes in nor has the skill to continue. He has a freedom to define himself that Bush was never allowed. If Bush was the whimpering end of an ideological era (an era that began in the 1960s), then Clinton is the coherent initiator of a truly post-ideological time. For conservatives whose political sensibility is framed against the invasion of ideology into politics, this is surely a positive development.

SO, TOO, IS THE COLLAPSE OF THE conservative movement. It collapsed primarily because it co-opted the central fallacy of liberalism: that politics can be understood, and countries successfully governed, through the prism of ideology. The most glaring example of this was the conviction that reducing taxes without reducing spending would somehow not lead to debt. This notion was never presented as a workable proposition, but as a matter of faith. And as evidence piled up that it was nonsense, conservatives did not consequently propose revoking (or adapting) it, but asserted it even more forcefully until it played itself out in the comedy of Bush's fateful lips. This kind of thinking, moreover, affected more than the economy; it was typical of a broader cast of mind, which constructed a notion of how things ought to be and reiterated it against recalcitrant reality: no new taxes in the face of massive, growing debt; no condoms in the midst of a spreading epidemic; pro-life absolutism amid widespread acceptance of abortion; crude demands for personal responsibility of an urban underclass that clearly needed help before it could help itself. This rigidness was not a dogged reiteration of principle; in time it became a mode of abstracted governance, a brittle form of politics that was once thought of as the quintessence of liberalism. It countered opposition with polemic rather than argument, seeing enemies and conspiracies where none existed, judging events without knowing anything about them. These ideologues were able to claim that Oliver North was a national hero merely because of his party loyalties. They knew Anita Hill was lying before they even watched the hearings. This kind of *a priorism* in politics was bound eventually to collapse under the weight of practical life, and sure enough it did.



THE SECOND, RELATED, ROOT OF conservatism's implosion came from its misunderstanding of the victory over communism. The collapse of one ideological politics paradoxically blew air into the embers of another. The thrill of seeing the Evil Empire disintegrate—and it *was* a thrill—ironically did not inspire an abandonment of ideology among conservatives, but actually intensified its attraction. This irony had some history in Anglo-Saxon conservatism; it belonged to the same frame of mind that believed both that communism was doomed and that it would soon take over the planet. But it was a cruel joke that American liberals adapted to the end of communism more swiftly than conservatives, especially since many of the former had spent the best part of decades wishing it away. But adapt the liberals did, moving more deftly to meet practical problems than those still wriggling gleefully in the Communist dust.

AND CONSERVATISM ALSO FAILED because it ceased to understand the society it had helped create. Daniel Bell long ago pointed out the instability of a politics that both wants to unleash individuals to pursue their economic destiny and simultaneously reimpose moral norms upon them. In the 1980s and '90s, this cultural contradiction found new intensity. Women, liberated in part by the market, refused to allow their personal, medical, and professional choices to be dictated by government. The changing middle-class family changed still further; the mass media popularized ways of living that had once been shrouded in shame or irony; a fast-growing popular culture found new languages of self-exposure to demystify what was left of conservative moral teaching. When Rich Bond asserted in Houston that "we are America," he was more than offensive, he was empirically wrong. The throngs of fanatics that made up the base of the Republican Party were barely related to the country at all. And a conservatism that has lost the inductive attitude, an empirical relationship to its own culture, is a conservatism that has pretty much ceased to exist.

TWO OF THE CENTRAL CONSERVative thinkers of the century—Leo Strauss and Michael Oakeshott—would no doubt have enjoyed the irony of this moment. Both saw political conservatism as a lesser adjunct of other, deeper matters—philosophy and religion. But each too bear some responsibility for conservatism's malaise. Strauss's clinging to ancient teachings of natural law undoubtedly fueled the intellectual right's inability to see that in the most important cultural area—the creation of a profound moral consensus—the game is finally up. The fracturing of our culture is too deep and too advanced to be resolved simply by anything but coercion; and coercion, Pat Buchanan will be disappointed to hear, is not a democratic option. And Oakeshott's whimsical, even irresponsible, aversion to politics as it is actually practiced did not help either in providing a principled political path between ideology and a rootless pragmatism. That difficult task—the most unsure of modernity's political journeys—is now Clinton's pressing challenge. But it is conservatism's primary responsibility.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

"The Education Goals, Stupid!"

Dear President-elect Clinton,

Congratulations on your election! A lot of us are looking forward to January 20 with excitement and hope.

Some people say that a big reason for your victory was a sign that hung in your campaign offices. It read, "The economy, stupid!" It reminded you and everyone working for you to stick to this issue instead of getting lost in a bunch of others, the way President Bush and the Republican party did.

Now, with respect to education, you may need something similar. There are hundreds of ideas about how to fix our education system, each with its enthusiastic supporters. But we need a strong and consistent focus if we are to improve student achievement so it is comparable to that in other industrialized nations.

My suggestion is a sign that reads, "The education goals, stupid!" The education goals are not perfect, but President Bush accepted them and you had a major hand in developing them. By now they've become the nation's goals as well. Their biggest failing has nothing to do with what they say. It's that little was done to achieve them. To be the education president, you must work toward achieving the education goals with the same passion you showed in seeking the presidency.

What needs to be done?

First: Show the American people where we have to go if our students are to be "first in the world in math and science" and what it means for students to "demonstrate competency in challenging subject matter, including English, mathematics, science, history and geography." Give support to groups like the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics that are already grappling with questions about content and performance standards. When the standards are developed, make sure they are widely publicized so that parents and students and teachers are aware of what students must achieve in order to meet them.

Second: We should spend less time testing students, but we'll need better tests that are geared to the national goals and standards. These tests will be used to give an honest report about how schools, school districts and states—and even individual students—are doing so people can make comparisons in a way that is not possible now.

Third: We need to support teachers and principals to help them help kids to meet the standards. This means creating training programs and textbooks designed with the standards in mind and using the best in technology.

Some people have said that a big reason for your victory was a sign that hung in your campaign offices. It read, "The economy, stupid!" It reminded you to stick to this issue.

Fourth: You'll have to be very tough about the need to work harder, but you've also got to educate the public away from the notion that they'll see results in a couple of years. If we are to achieve the education goals, we'll need the same tenacity that was required to win the Cold War.

The best way to keep people's minds focused on reaching the goals is to attach consequences to achieving them or failing to do so. But we can't simply lower the boom the day after the standards are in place. Kids and schools will need time to come up to speed. Furthermore, if we are serious about raising the achievement of *all* our students, we'll also have to fulfill another education goal that says, "All children in America will start school ready to learn." That means adequate health care and nutrition for kids and opportunities for preschool and parent education—an end to neglect.

But as time goes on, it is essential that consequences kick in. Students who achieve the goals should be able to get into college—your college program will help with that—and those who don't should not. Students who achieve the goals and go right to work should have access to better jobs at better pay—your school-to-work program will help with that. Schools that do a good job helping students raise their achievement levels should be rewarded, and schools that consistently fail to help their students improve, even after these schools have been given extra resources and extra help, should be closed down.

Many U.S. cities are in terrible trouble, and they have made big cutbacks in education spending. Too many children go to schools where savage inequalities reign: closets for classrooms, leaking roofs, no supplies, no labs.... Conditions like these will be no help in achieving the education goals. When you target money to be spent on repairing infrastructure, remember these crumbling schools. And when you are deciding where to put the 100,000 extra policemen you talked about, give priority to making our schools safe.

Finally, you should pick a secretary of education who sends a clear message that he or she is passionately committed to the education goals. Pick somebody special—like Hillary. We know you won't let her down.

Sincerely, Al Shanker

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1992 by Albert Shanker.

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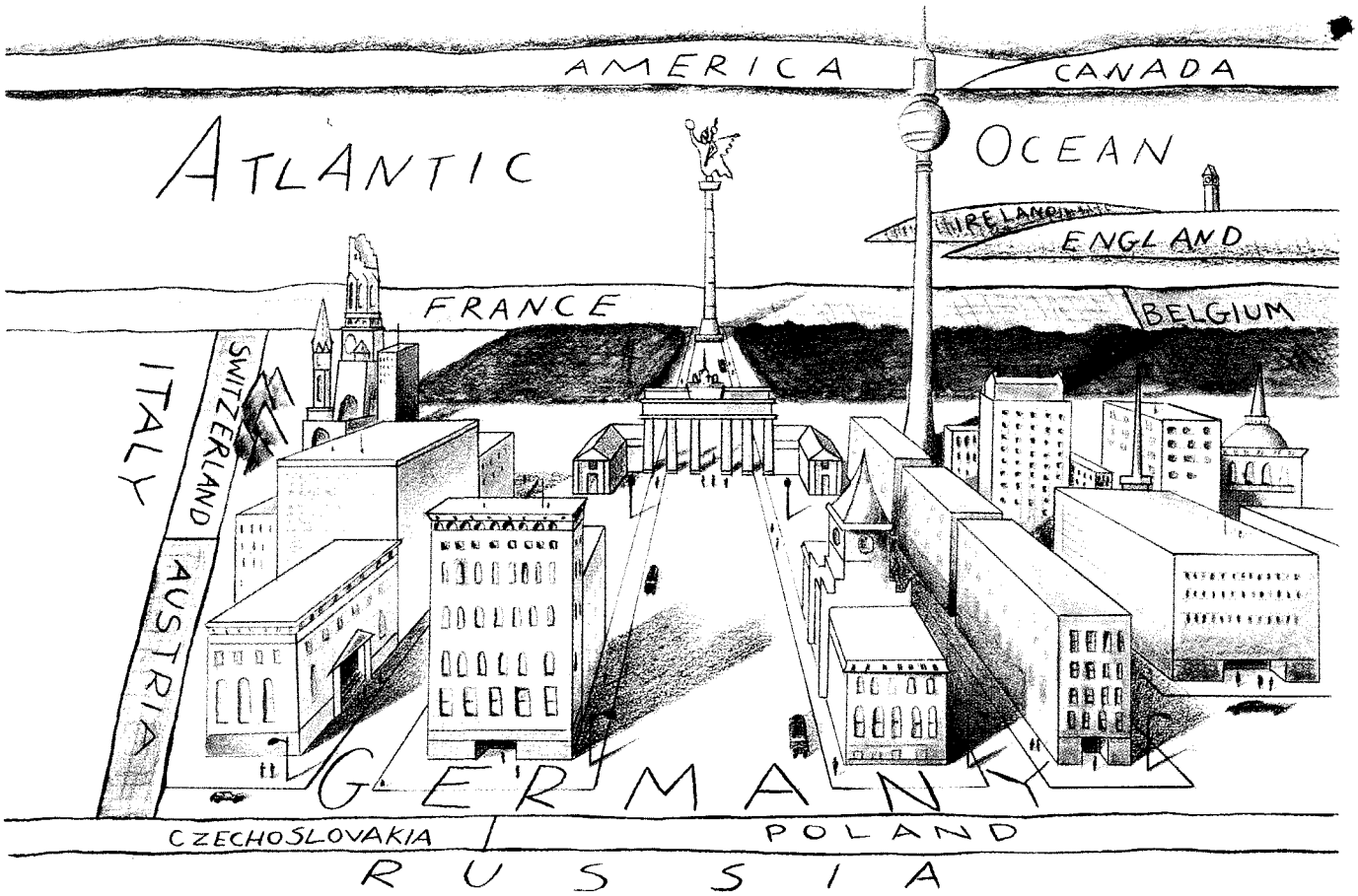

INSIGHT/Peter Yuill

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